

# Rotary

The Official Magazine of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

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February/March 2021

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LIVING IN THE PLASTIC AGE:

It's time to stop  
plastic pollution







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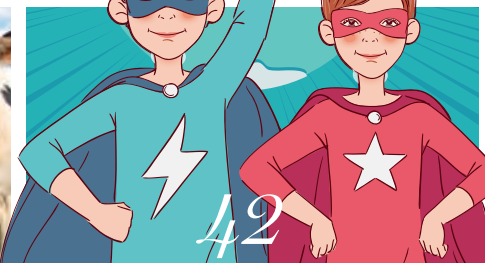




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# *Living in the plastic age*

*EndPlasticSoup is a Rotary movement, started in the Netherlands, which is changing the conversation about the environment and which has captured the imaginations of many.*

| DAVE KING |

**W**HEN the Belgian-American chemist, Leo Baekeland, created the first synthetic, mass-produced plastic in 1907, little did he realise what he was unleashing on the world.

There has been no material more revolutionary than modern plastic.

Since the 1950s, it has been used in almost every single industry, in a vast variety of ways, thanks to its versatility, high durability and an ability to be moulded into whatever shape necessary.

No material has changed the world the way plastic has.

Gert-Jan van Dommelen, co-founder of the proposed EndPlasticSoup Rotary Action Group, knows full well how plastics threaten to destroy the earth's eco-system, and he wants to do something about it.

"Plastic soup is not just the plastic waste in the oceans, it's not just the plastic waste in the waters or our rivers and lakes.

"It is the plastic waste in our environment," he said.

"Eighty per cent of plastic waste gets into the ocean sooner or later, through the air or through our rivers."

In little more than two years, EndPlasticSoup is gaining traction.

Already, a number of Rotary clubs in Great Britain & Ireland have signed up to become a member club, joining a movement which is supported by 1,500 clubs, and 3,500 Rotarians and Rotaractors globally, with 72 Ambassador Clubs in 47 countries.

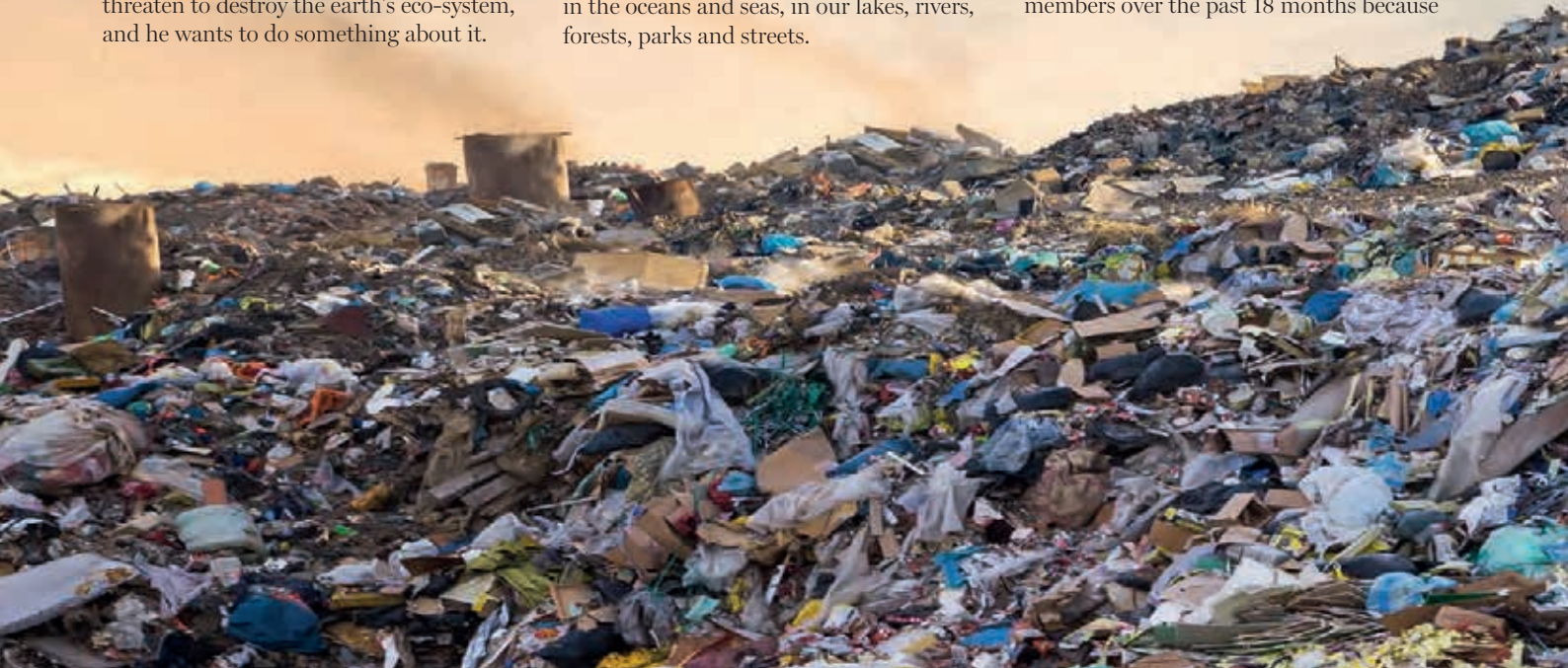
Their aim is simple; by 2050, to rid the world of the plastic soup which lingers in the oceans and seas, in our lakes, rivers, forests, parks and streets.

Their desire is for Rotary, Rotaract and Interact clubs worldwide to work together to solve and prevent the plastic pollution problem.

As Rotary seeks to define itself to a younger audience beyond a traditional constituency of polio, so plastics and campaigning for the environment is being regarded by some as a path to Millennial enlightenment.

"EndPlasticSoup really appeals to the younger generation," explained Gert-Jan, who has been a Rotarian for less than four years with the Rotary Club of Huizen Gooimeer, 25 miles east of Amsterdam.

"Youngsters now regard Rotary as a different organisation and are happy to be part of this. Many people see this as new Rotary. My own club gained eight new members over the past 18 months because





of this initiative.”

Five Rotary clubs from the Netherlands started the initiative in 2018 following a plastic soup fishing weekend cleaning up Amsterdam’s canals.

What now exists is an advocacy and action movement which aims to educate, challenge and provide a pathway towards change.

“Rotary cannot solve this alone,” added Gert-Jan. “We need all the people on this planet.

“We need all the governments, all the industries and all the organisations to work together, building alliances, so we can accelerate and connect to make this possible.”

In practical terms, EndPlasticSoup is looking for Rotary, Rotaract and Interact clubs to start the debate by creating awareness in their own communities, perhaps taking on a small project, such as the clean-up of a park or a beach.

This is a perfect opportunity to recruit community-minded volunteers.

In Gert-Jan’s home town of Huizen Gooimeer, the Rotary club has strong links with the town’s High Schools and have organised events with the environmentally-awakened students who have been inspired by Swedish teenage activist, Greta Thunberg.

There they have worked with children on the perils of cigarettes – not just on the health risks of smoking, but on the

dangers to animals, and that has clearly struck a chord.

Cigarettes filters contain microplastics, so when the butts are discarded on the streets, they are collected by birds and other animals which can cause harm. This is a message the schoolchildren have been successfully taking home to their parents.

In the Moluccas in Indonesia, where the river takes care of the rubbish when it rains, flushing the plastic debris into the ocean, EndPlasticSoup is working with its partner Happy Green Islands on Saparua to educate the children.

The schoolchildren’s task is to fill three big nets of plastic rubbish they collect each day, with a reward once they have completed the task.

EndPlasticSoup works with 50 corporate organisations worldwide.

All share similar values and all are making a difference in various pockets of the globe, establishing connections with Rotary clubs in the Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, the Caribbean, Honduras, Turkey, Russia and Brazil.

One example is the work they are doing with Boyan Slat, the Dutch inventor and entrepreneur, who is also the founder of The Ocean Cleanup, which has developed advanced systems to rid the world’s oceans of plastics.

The Ocean Cleanup is also targeting rivers. EndPlasticSoup is working in eight different locations, including in

Alexandria, Egypt, cleaning the River Nile for a project which is reaching across communities and involves both Orthodox Christian and Muslim Rotary clubs.

A legal charitable entity in the Netherlands, EndPlasticSoup has applied to become a formal Rotary Action Group worldwide, working with WASH, the Water Sanitation & Hygiene Rotary Action Group, and ESRAG, the Environmental Sustainability Action Group.

EndPlasticSoup has created a series of action packages to provide a focus for Rotary club environmental activities.

Over the coming months, the focus is on a series of action days to co-ordinate Rotary activities and engage communities.

March 22nd is World Water Day, June 5th is the United Nations’ World Environment Day, June 6th is Rotary EndPlasticSoup Action Day and September 18th is World Cleanup Day.

It is a campaign, said the Dutch co-founder, which is crossing generations.

“Suddenly, people are seeing Rotary in a different way and I think that is appealing. People are so concerned about the planet and about climate-change.

“It is difficult to do something about carbon dioxide and things you can’t grab.

“With plastic, you can grab it. Plastic is there. You can do something about it and you can start today.”

Gert-Jan added: “What is important is awareness, that is why we are asking ▶



**"AS ROTARY SEEKS TO DEFINE ITSELF TO A YOUNGER AUDIENCE BEYOND A TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENCY OF POLIO, SO PLASTICS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IS BEING REGARDED BY SOME AS A PATH TO MILLENNIAL ENLIGHTENMENT."**





A beach plastic clean-up in Western Norway

Rotary clubs all over the world to join this initiative just by adding the EndPlasticSoup element to their actions.

“For example, you may be doing a walk for water to do fund raising for Africa, with schoolchildren or community volunteers. Why not ask to clean up on their walk because we don’t want to leave plastic in nature?”

“We want to educate children not just by giving a lesson, but by asking the schools to work with parents, staff and the wider community to really reduce plastic consumption.

“In my home town, when we go to the flower shop we ask them not to use plastic wrapping but paper instead.

“It is about awareness, action and

alliances across the full cycle, not just clean-up at the end.

“This is not an easy thing, it is complex, but when you start doing this, miracles happen.

“Everybody wants the same thing, and that is what is unique about this project.

“Start at the club level, start today.

“Try to find a few people who feel energised to do one or two things initially.

“Do this step-by-step. Don’t make it too big, we will need you for more years than just this year.

“Join us now and, if possible, become a member club to support us.

“We can share all the information and knowledge we have.” ●

## Information

For more information visit:  
[endplasticsoup.nl/en/](https://endplasticsoup.nl/en/)

## Fact file

### PLASTIC

- The world produces about 400 million metric tons of plastic every year – 45% is for single-use purposes.
- Every year, eight million metric tonnes of plastic enter our ocean – one garbage truck per minute, much of this waste flows from rivers and other waterways.
- By 2030, virtually every seabird species on the planet will be eating plastic.
- Worldwide, 73% of beach litter is plastic; filters from cigarette butts, bottles, bottle caps, food wrappers, grocery bags, and polystyrene containers.
- Packaging accounts for 40% of total plastic usage. Most of it never gets recycled or incinerated.
- The Beat the Microbead app is a fast way to learn if your cosmetics and personal care products contain plastic ingredients. This app uses state-of-the-art text recognition technology. Just scan the ingredients of your products and check them for microplastics.

**Sources** | *Plastic Oceans, End PlasticSoup, National Geographic.*



A boy picks his way along a path littered with plastic debris, on the island of Saparua in Indonesia

©Kees Lafaber



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# A clean, green new area of focus

*Raise your recycled glasses! For the first time in Rotary history, we have a new Area of Focus – and it's focusing on all things clean and green.*

| MEAGAN MARTIN, EDITOR, ROTARY DOWN UNDER |



Peacebuilding and  
Conflict Prevention



Disease Prevention  
& Treatment



Water, Sanitation  
and Hygiene



Basic Education  
& Literacy



Maternal  
& Child Health



Community Economic  
development



Supporting the  
Environment

**T**HE Rotary Foundation's new grant system was adopted in 2014, when Rotary International supported six key Areas of Focus for Rotary projects.

Now, for the first time in history, a seventh Area of Focus has been unanimously approved by both The Rotary Foundation Board of Trustees (TRF) and the Rotary International Board – supporting the environment.

With growing interest in environmentally-based projects in recent years, the decision is a great win for Rotary, the planet, and its people.

In October 2019, TRF Trustee, Ravi Ravindran, moved a motion for environmental issues to form part of its activity. It was unanimously passed, and a task force was selected to recommend how the Areas of Focus were to be altered.

The task force was chaired by the then Rotary International President, Ian Riseley, from Australia. He said: "As a lifelong environmentalist, I am delighted our great organisation has recognised that the environment is a worthy and appropriate destination for our project activity. This is an exciting moment in Rotary history."

Many environmental projects are already supported by the Foundation, especially since the decision in April last year to add environmental elements within the existing Areas of Focus.

More than \$18 million in Foundation global grant funding has been allocated to environment-related projects over the past five years.

Creating a distinct Area of Focus to support the environment will give Rotary members even more ways to bring about positive change in the world and increase our impact.

And while now official, it is certainly not new ground

for Rotary, with many past leaders playing an integral role in addressing environmental concerns.

In 1990/91, Rotary International (RI) President Paulo VC Costa from São Paulo, Brazil, made the environment one of his primary causes, creating the Preserve Planet Earth sub-committee, which looked at ways clubs and members could conduct environmental initiatives. "We have finally caught up to Past President Paulo's vision," Ian said.

And in an interview with *The Rotarian*, past RI President Barry Rassin, from the Bahamas, where 80% of land is less than five feet above sea level, stated that climate change is almost personal.

"My country is going to be gone if we do nothing," Barry said.

"If we're losing countries due to sea level changes, if stronger storms are disrupting water supplies or destroying people's livelihoods, that's more people who are going to be disadvantaged."

"So caring about the environment goes toward our ultimate mission, and we should give it the importance it deserves."

While the climate change debate sparks passionate opinions across the globe, it is an issue close to the hearts of today's youth, who are using environmental rights to demand more action to address ecological crises around the world.

Ian says including the environment to Rotary's Areas of Focus not only broadens Rotary's grant activity, but could play a crucial role in making the organisation more attractive to younger people and thus assisting membership.

"Of course, it is not just younger people who care about the planet," he chips in. "As a 73-year-old non-hippie, I am evidence of that!" Grant applications for projects will be accepted from July 1, 2021. ●







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# *We need to solve the plastics problem by 2050*

| DAVE KING |

**T**HE River Thames is a plastic soup nightmare.

Scientists at Royal Holloway, University of London, recently discovered that the Thames has a higher density of microplastics than several other major rivers in the world.

After taking water samples last summer, they found microbeads, glitter and other plastic fragments.

Crabs were found to have consumed small items of plastics.

Researchers were unsurprised that microplastics had been found in 80% of London's tap water, estimating that around 94,000 microplastics per second flow down the river at Greenwich.

And with the density of microplastics in the Thames credited at 19.5 plastics per cubic metre, this is greater than levels recorded in the Rhine, the Danube, and lower levels of the Yangtze River in China.

EndPlasticSoup co-founder, Gert-Jan

van Dommelen, remains unsurprised.

"The problem is that we have created so much plastic, and we have done that mainly during the past 15 years," he said.

"We produce 1.2 million plastic bottles every minute and all of this plastic does not disappear automatically.

"About 45% is single use plastic and only 9% is recycled.

"We are dropping five million metric tons of plastic on nature, which is equivalent to 500,000 Eiffel Towers."



Plastic fragments

The real problem is that plastic never goes away. It just gets smaller.

And that's an issue, because in the end it becomes a microplastic, smaller than 5mm, which was what scientists found in the River Thames.

Plastic is in our plankton and microbes. Plankton plays a vital role in our marine ecosystem. However, such is the level of sea pollution, that they are riddled with plastic.

These marine drifters are responsible for between 40% to 60% carbon dioxide absorption on this planet. Latest figures suggest plankton are less functioning.

The oceans are our lungs, producing over 60% of the oxygen on this planet, but now creating less oxygen than they used to.

Plankton also forms a start of the food chain. Humans eat fish, so therefore microplastics are being absorbed by our bodies. We eat about two kilos of plastic a year that way.





**"PLANKTON ALSO FORMS A START OF THE FOOD CHAIN. HUMANS EAT FISH, SO THEREFORE MICROPLASTICS ARE BEING ABSORBED BY OUR BODIES. WE EAT ABOUT TWO KILOS OF PLASTIC A YEAR THAT WAY."**

It remains a huge grey area about the precise, long-term health risks of plastics to the human body.

Some have suggested, without proper scientific research, of a possible link to Alzheimer's.

What is undeniable is that it is not good news. But at the heart of the issue lies the use of single-use plastics.

Straws, plastic knives and forks and other disposables. These need to be eradicated with the same vigour which Rotary fought polio.

The European Union has said that single-use plastic may no longer be sold in shops from 2021.

In the Netherlands, they have adopted this policy since last July.

While the plastics industry is a powerful body, EndPlasticSoup, is arguing a partnership of understanding, and solutions is the way forward.

"These people don't want to ruin the planet, they want a living, but they cannot change overnight," insisted Gert-Jan, who believes the solution is in finding new, recyclable plastics.

"When humans work together, when we use the technologies and new ideas, when we realise the problem, we establish priorities and can really do a lot. Rotary is there to make it possible.

"With certain plastics, if we make them differently, you can recycle them and you can do it much smarter.

It is with this spirit of optimism that Gert-Jan remains confident that the EndPlasticSoup goal of 2050 can be achieved.

Last July, after 36 years of working for computer giant IBM, he quit his job to focus on Rotary and other charitable projects.

Rotary can make a difference with the environmental debate.

"We are people of action, but not activists," he insisted. "We have relationships and networks with people, so we can really accelerate solutions.

"Rotary is seen as an independent organisation with ethics which really wants good for mankind."

As for the political hot potato of whether Rotary and politics should entwine, the Dutch businessman points out that although Rotarians don't choose parties, they need Governments and authorities to influence change.

He added: "We think Rotary can make a difference and our ambition is that by no more or no less than 2050 we will have solved this problem.

"We need to prevent and solve the problem and we can do that all together as Rotary, Rotaract and Interact clubs.

"We are also looking at alliances with industry, with governments and volunteers who will see Rotary in a different way." ●

### | *Fact file* |

#### **PLASTIC**

- Every year, we produce 1275 kilos of plastic per person in the world.
- In 2019 we produced 1.2 million plastic bottles per minute.
- About 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide. More than one million bags are used every minute.
- A plastic bag has an average working life of 15 minutes.
- World plastic production has increased exponentially from 2.1 million tonnes in 1950, to 147 million in 1993, to 406 million by 2015.
- Estimates for how long plastic endures range from 450 years to forever.
- My Little Plastic Footprint is an app which helps you reduce your plastic consumption by going on a plastic diet.  
**[www.mylittleplasticfootprint.org](http://www.mylittleplasticfootprint.org)**

**Sources** | *Plastic Oceans, End PlasticSoup, National Geographic.*



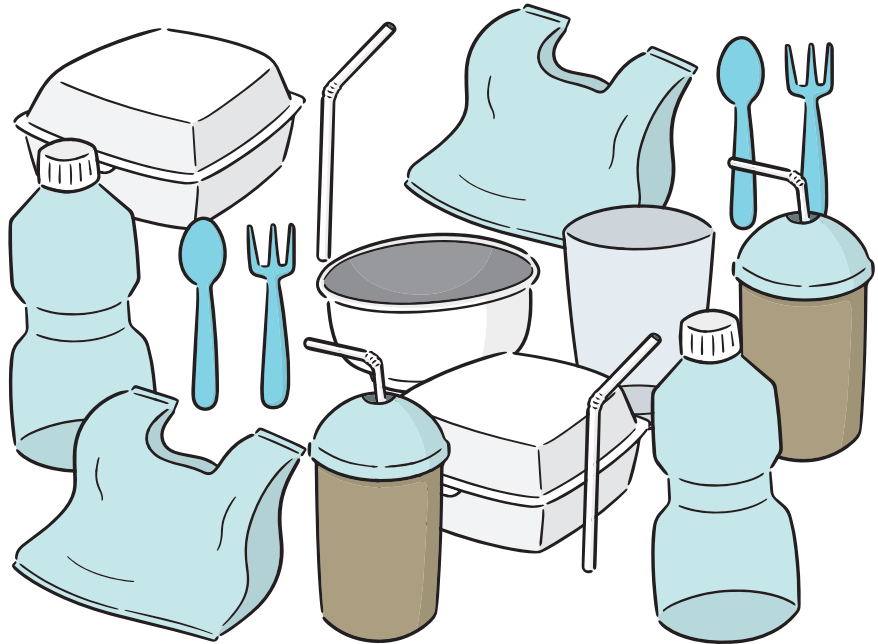
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## The dangers of single-use plastics

**S**INGLE-use plastics, or disposable plastics, are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These items are things like plastic bags, straws, coffee stirrers, soda and water bottles and most food packaging.

We produce roughly 300 million tons of plastic each year and half of it is disposable!

World-wide, only 10 to 13% of plastic items are recycled.

The nature of petroleum based disposable plastic makes it difficult to recycle and they have to add new virgin materials and chemicals to it to do so.

Additionally, there are a limited number of items for which recycled plastic can be used.

Petroleum-based plastic is not biodegradable and usually goes into a landfill where it is buried or it gets into the water and finds its way into the ocean.

Although plastic will not biodegrade, so that it decomposes into natural substance like soil, it will degrade into tiny

particles after many years.

In the process of breaking down, it releases toxic chemicals (additives that were used to shape and harden the plastic) which make their way into our food and water supply.

These toxic chemicals are now being found in our bloodstream and the latest research has found them to disrupt the endocrine system which can cause cancer, infertility, birth defects, impaired immunity and many other ailments.

We produce hundreds of millions of tons of plastic every year, most of which cannot be recycled.

The focus is on using less plastic, moving towards environmentally sustainable products and services, and coming up with technology that recycles plastic more efficiently. ●

| Information |

[plasticfreechallenge.org](https://plasticfreechallenge.org)



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# ESRAG 101

*You may have never heard of ESRAG, but that's about to change! ESRAG – or the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group – is a worldwide organisation which, you guessed it, focuses on environmental sustainability.*

**E**SRAG aims to build awareness, inspire action, and implement club and district-level projects focused on increasing environmental sustainability and mitigation of climate disruption.

They do this through promoting educational resources, dialogue about environmental sustainability, and supporting best practice to be used for both projects and daily choices.

So, what does environmental sustainability have to do with Rotary?

Every person's actions have an impact on the environment.

We can all do our bit to make this a positive impact and not a negative one, and Rotarians are no different.

Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley said, "Protecting the environment and curbing climate change are essential to Rotary's goal of sustainable service."

"The time is long past when environmental sustainability can be dismissed as not Rotary's concern. It is,

and must be, everyone's concern."

Along with being essential to the goal of sustainable service, environmental sustainability has strong links to the original six Areas of Focus – and has just been added as a seventh one!

The links are clear, and the opportunities to positively contribute are enormous.

Whether as an individual, a club or a district, think about what you can do to support the health of the planet and Rotary's work. ●



## Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

Sustainably and equitably managing natural resources to address the root causes of conflict and war to increase peace.



## Disease Prevention and Treatment

What's good for the planet is good for us – a healthy environment and access to clean energy helps prevent diseases.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Extreme weather events are on the rise as our earth changes, and better locally directed resource management can reverse desertification, detoxify water, and mitigate against flooding and drought



## Maternal and Child Health

Clean air, clean water and sufficient food have a significant impact on the health of mothers and children.



## Basic Education and Literacy

Healthy children in peaceful environments have increased social stability and are better able to benefit from education and literacy programmes.



## Community Economic Development

Environmental sustainability supports local economies and community development for long-term job creation.



## Supporting the Environment

Just added because, not only does it align with the other Areas of Focus, it is important enough to have its own to support Rotary clubs doing even more good.

## Information

To find out more about ESRAG in Great Britain & Ireland, contact:

Martin Rooney:

[malcrooney@gmail.com](mailto:malcrooney@gmail.com) or

Kirsten Weber:

[kirsten.weber@esrag.org](mailto:kirsten.weber@esrag.org)



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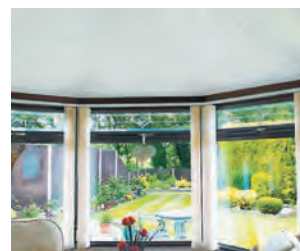
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# Combating climate change starts with you

| LAURA WILLCOX |

**T**HIS year, Rotary International will establish the environment as the seventh Area of Focus. By making this move, which has been suggested for many years, this will give Rotarians even more ways to bring about positive change in the world and increase our impact.

Rotary's Areas of Focus encompass some of the world's most critical humanitarian needs, providing an opportunity for members to transform the world through their volunteering and service projects.

Over recent years, the effects our lifestyle is having on the environment have become more evident. Climate change is an increasing threat to our planet, and action needs to be taken now.

Here we take a look at how different industries are damaging the environment, and what we can do as individuals to reduce our impact.

In order to make a big change, we must look at our own choices and actions.

## **The Big Picture: Fashion Industry**

The fashion industry is responsible for an alarming 10% of all of humanity's carbon emissions.

This is largely due to the rise of the 'fast fashion' industry.

Today, because of the low cost, and ever-changing trends, consumers are buying twice as many items of clothing as they did a decade ago.

As a result, more clothing is discarded piling up in landfill sites. Unsustainable methods of manufacturing are being used to cut costs.

## **Take Action**

**Buy Less Clothing:** One of the most important things we can do is simply buy less clothing, wearing clothes we already own for longer.

By wearing one item of clothing for nine months longer, you can reduce your carbon footprint by 30%.

**Shop Second Hand:** If everyone bought one used item instead of new this year, the amount of CO2 emissions saved would be equivalent to removing half a million cars from the road for a year.

## **The Big Picture: Farming**

Food production has become a serious environmental concern, from the distance in food miles to the way it is farmed and the packaging it is sold in.

As the world's population grows rapidly, food production and demand increases.

Farming creates 10% of the UK's emissions, and globally is responsible for between 17-32% of greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Take Action**

Sustainable food production is key in order to feed an ever-growing world and reduce CO2 emissions.

One way to reduce emissions, is to reduce your meat intake.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations calculated that 14.5% of the global carbon footprint comes from the production of meat and livestock.

By reducing your meat intake and eating more plant-based food, your

carbon footprint will reduce.

Another way to reduce your carbon footprint is to eat more locally sourced, organic food.

This reduces the distance goods are transported, and supports local businesses.

Finally, consider the food you buy carefully. We throw away 6.6 million tonnes of household food waste in the UK - 70% of this could have been eaten.

## **The Big Picture: Travel**

The travel industry has long been under the microscope for the environmental damage it causes.

The travel sector accounts for 8% of global carbon emissions.

Transport has become more accessible, with more cars on the road and flights becoming cheaper as travelling abroad becomes more appealing.

Air travel is the main culprit behind the travel industry's global emissions.

As the demand for luxury travel increases, and the tourism industry continues to grow, it is likely the carbon emissions will continue to rise.

## **Take Action**

The travel industry continues to find ways to reduce its carbon footprint after continued pressures to become more environmentally-friendly.

Electric and hybrid cars currently being developed as a more environmentally-friendly alternative to petrol and diesel cars.

There are also numerous ways in which we can take responsibility of our own travel decisions.





"ONE WAY TO REDUCE EMISSIONS, IS TO REDUCE YOUR MEAT INTAKE. THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CALCULATED THAT 14.5% OF THE GLOBAL CARBON FOOTPRINT COMES FROM THE PRODUCTION OF MEAT AND LIVESTOCK. "

*Eat less meat*

Swapping driving for public transport for an average distance of 25km saves 184kg of carbon emissions per day.

Walking where possible will also make a huge impact on the environment.

Walking just 3km a week, instead of driving, saves 29kg of carbon emissions per week.

By making some very simple changes in your life, you can reduce carbon emissions and help save the earth for generations to follow.

If everyone made an effort to make small changes, the impact would be huge. ●



*Ditch the car*

### *| Fact file |*

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

- In the last 170 years, we added 2.4 trillion tons of Carbon Dioxide into our atmosphere. Half of this was added in the last 35 to 50 years.
- It takes around 1,800 gallons of water to grow enough cotton to produce just one pair of jeans.
- Up to half of all food produced is lost or wasted before or after it reaches consumers.



*Buy old over new*



| TOM GRIFFIN |

*Rotary President of Great Britain & Ireland*

# The times they are a-changing

**A** FREEZING winter, Covid moving us to tiers, declining membership numbers. Not much reason for optimism, is there? Actually, there is. The pandemic has seen many people volunteering who haven't done so before – a potential pool of new Rotarians.

However much we might by now be getting bored with Zoom, Rotarians have adapted well to not meeting face-to-face, and there is every chance that when we get back to “normal”, many clubs will mix and match their meeting arrangements.

This will make those clubs less daunting to someone who finds Rotary attractive, but struggles with the time and cost pressures that the weekly meal-meeting imposes.

Our opportunity to get involved in supporting mass testing and mass vaccination programmes gives us a great opportunity to remind people that we are people of action.

But we need to do more.

Districts and Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland need to be more focused on growing Rotary.

With declining numbers and an ageing membership, many districts struggle to fill all the posts they're supposed to, and district governors are therefore distracted from their key job of leading their district.

Moreover, Rotary GB&I has long been hampered by having an unwieldy governing body of 31 members – at least 26 of whom change every year – that's no way to run a business.

This continual churn of members makes it difficult for the governing

body to take a long-term strategic approach to addressing Rotary's problems.

This year, the Governing Council has been addressing both these issues.

It has been discussing how neighbouring districts can work together, maximizing the effective use of the talents of district officers, and freeing up district governors to concentrate on renewing Rotary in these islands – starting new clubs to attract a younger generation of new Rotarians, while still helping traditional clubs to grow.

Some districts are already working together to run multi-district presidents-elect training, so we should see this collaboration start to develop from the beginning of the new Rotary year in July.

Governing Council has also agreed to reform itself by changing it from being largely composed of serving district governors to a much smaller body, comprising Rotarians with relevant skills, experience and background, who will each serve for a three-year term – thus ending the frustrating annuality of the current arrangements.

The Rotary GB&I bylaws, however, need to be changed for this to be brought about, so Governing Council will be bringing forward the necessary resolutions to the Business Meeting on May 21st.

These may be difficult times, but they are also exciting times. The reforms which Governing Council has been considering open up opportunities for us to renew and rejuvenate Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland.

Now it's up to us all to deliver! ●





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# *Is printing Rotary magazine sustainable?*

*As Rotary begins to focus efforts on its new Area of Focus, the environment, what about the impact of publishing this magazine?*

| LAURA WILLCOX |

**C**LIMATE change and the environment is a big ticket concern for many. Today, we are all making careful lifestyle choices based on the impact which our everyday actions are having on the planet.

So it was no surprise when Rotary International announced last year that protecting the environment would become its seventh Area of Focus.

Rotary has always been conscious of its impact on the planet, considering the environmental impact of everything it does, whilst encouraging Rotarians to do the same.

However, some have questioned the environmental cost and value of producing a print magazine in a digital world of information.

So, let's address these concerns by taking an in-depth look into *Rotary* magazine's true cost to the environment, as well as exploring measures which have been put in place to reduce its impact.

## **Why do you use plastic wrapping?**

In recent years single-use plastic has formed an increasingly bad reputation because of its impact on the environment.

Currently, the magazine is wrapped in a recycled lightweight polywrap.

Despite the wrapping being recycled, it remains a concern among some. So, we have been looking into some alternative options.





**"THE PAPER USED TO MAKE THE ROTARY MAGAZINE COMES FROM SUSTAINABLE FORESTS WITHIN EUROPE WHERE THE TREES ARE PLANTED SIMILAR TO CROP, PURELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING PAPER."**

The strategic decision to use recycled poly to wrap *Rotary* magazine, which is posted to 40,000 Rotarians, was made because it is the most cost-effective option. It is also 100% recyclable, and fit for purpose. Don't forget, the magazine is funded by its members.

Rotarians are encouraged to recycle the polywrap through household recycling, or at larger recycling points, such as those found at supermarkets.

However, the wrapping will be changed. We're looking at either a paper wrap or 100% compostable paper starch, both of which are sustainable and offer the best environmental solution available. The aim is to implement the new packaging later this year.

### **Doesn't the use of paper add to deforestation?**

How do you think forests are doing? Declining at a disastrous rate year after year? Wrong. A 2019 survey by Two Sides found that 59% of European consumers believe European forests are shrinking.

However, between 2005, and 2015 they grew significantly. Their expansion over the decade equates to an area the size of Switzerland.

The paper used to publish *Rotary* magazine is known as FSC®.

It is sourced from sustainable forests within Europe where the trees are planted similar to crops, but purely for the purpose of making paper.

The forests from which *Rotary* magazine paper is produced are certified by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).

This is an international certification scheme ensuring that forests are managed in an ecologically sustainable way.

This certification is a reassurance that the paper we use comes from a sustainable source.

In terms of printing, Rotary in Great

Britain & Ireland employs a certificated print supplier who is FSC certificated, and has been awarded both 19001 and 1500 quality and environmental accreditations.

### **Are your publishers ethical?**

Rotary ensures that all of its suppliers meet its high ethical standards and strong environmental ethos.

Contently, who are *Rotary* magazine's publisher, work closely with its suppliers and customers to address environmental issues.

All of its magazine suppliers have environmental credentials.

Contently are committed to continually improving their environmental performance by controlling and managing their operational activities and products.

### **Why doesn't the *Rotary* magazine just go digital?**

Today we live in an increasingly digital world, but let's not forget that digital also has an environmental impact too. That's something which is often ignored.

According to a study by the Boston Consulting Group, the internet is responsible for roughly one billion tonnes of greenhouse gases a year, or around 2% of world emissions.

Even though in today's world more news and information is becoming available online, abandoning the physical magazine and focussing purely on digital would be a huge backward step for Rotary's promotional activity.

A survey of over 10,700 consumers in 2017 found 72% of consumers preferred to read the printed versions of magazines over the digital copy.

Even in today's digital world, don't underestimate the power of print.

### ***Rotary* magazine is our best marketing tool**

Although *Rotary* magazine articles are

also published online, there is something special about having a physical copy which people can read.

And from a commercial point of view, advertisers love it too because of the longevity of print and response rate.

Many clubs and Rotarians have adopted the 'Read It and Leave It' initiative.

They realise how you can use *Rotary* magazine as a prime marketing tool to boost membership, as well as increase awareness, by leaving copies at key public points, or passing it on to friends and family.

Clearly, in the current Covid climate, this initiative has taken a back seat, but the opportunity is there to spread the word to the wider public about Rotary.

Some 10,000 copies of *Rotary* magazine are currently distributed each issue to Sainsbury's supermarkets around the country to raise Rotary's profile.

All of these copies are picked up by the public who read about Rotary's incredible triumphs and stories, showcasing People of Action.

Is *Rotary* magazine sustainable? The answer is yes. The print industry is one of the most sustainable in the world, with great green credentials.

You should feel comfortable knowing that you can enjoy *Rotary* magazine in the physical format, and a carbon footprint which is incredibly low. ●

### **References**

- Two Sides- The Myths and Facts booklet
- PPA Magazine Wrapping Guidelines
- Digital and Printed Magazines' Effects on the Environment, Jeannie Nguyen, 2010
- The Guardian- How sustainable are printed magazines?



# *Keeping the home fires burning*

*Abingdon Vesper Rotary's initiative of adopting a school appeal to build a fuel saving eco-stove, won the Rodney Huggins' Rotary GB&I environmental project award. Maya Smeulders, from the Oxfordshire club, describes how the project works.*

FAMILIES in Uganda, like those in other parts of Africa, Asia and South America, cook their meals on open fires using firewood or charcoal.

Due to high population growth, the country is becoming more densely populated. This leads to pressures on land for farming, forests diminishing and firewood increasingly hard to come by.

We found that the women in rural areas are now spending up to five hours daily to collect a bundle of firewood.

In addition to the time and effort involved, this exposes them daily to the risk of sexual harassment.

Cooking on open fires in smoke-filled kitchens is also very unhealthy.

The World Health Organization reckons that spending one hour in a smoky kitchen equals smoking 400 cigarettes. It is the main cause of eye and lung disease, and it damages the development of unborn children.

Obviously, cutting down trees has a detrimental effect on the environment by reducing water retention, increasing soil erosion and diminishing rainfall.

For all these reasons a sustainable energy solution for cooking is a necessity for three billion people in the world.

For people to accept a change to their daily habits it is important that the solution is practical, affordable and maintainable.

We came across the existence of



traditional African stoves which use up to 70% less firewood and greatly reduce the amount of smoke from cooking. People had largely forgotten about such stoves, possibly because so many lives were lost during periods of political upheaval.

The stoves are made from free local materials like dried grass, various kinds of soil, ash, sawdust, sweet potato leaves, water and cow-dung.

These are mixed together into a kind of clay from which the eco-stove is constructed. Banana stems are used to keep the smoke-channels and the seats for the pans open. Once formed, the stove needs to dry slowly before the final shaping of the fire-openings and pan stands.

This takes about two to three weeks.

Construction requires a fair amount of physical effort, but with a trained person on hand, most people can build their own stove. Once finished, several pans can be cooked simultaneously with one fire.

The fire burns evenly and efficiently. There is less smoke and less risk of burns.

The fire needs little attention, so that other tasks can be carried out during cooking. There is no ash in the food.

All the people we met were happy

with their eco-stove and would not want to go back to open fires.

The time women save by having to make only two instead of seven wood-gathering trips adds up to 60 days a year.

This time and energy could be used to make bio-briquettes from harvest or food waste, thus reducing the need for firewood even further.

There may be other more sophisticated stoves on the market, but most people cannot afford them.

As semi-subsistence farmers, they are very short of cash. We know from our work

eco-stoves being built in one year.

Instruction leaflets have been produced and radio time bought to further spread awareness.

But eco-stoves are not only needed in homes, they are also needed in schools.

In Mubende District alone, 200,000 school meals a day are cooked on open fires in school kitchens, devouring masses of firewood.

Planting new trees is necessary, but they take time to grow. Fuel saving eco-stoves have an immediate effect on saving existing trees and will allow newly planted trees to grow. So, both actions are needed to combat climate change.

Under the Learning 4 Life School Development Project, we have constructed a bigger version of eco-stove to accommodate the huge pans used in schools.

To date 16 stoves have been built at schools at a cost of £250 per school.

It needs a team of two trainers and three local workers making five trips to the school, which involves renting a motorbike, to complete a stove.

The local people are trained on the job, so that they become the new trainers in their communities. Support is needed to expand the programme to more schools.

Please help by adopting a school for £250 which will cover the cost of labour, transport, two chimneys and some trees.

The developed world is the main contributor to global warming. Sub-Saharan countries have contributed very little, but they will be the first to suffer the consequences. It is only fair that we give them support to help themselves. ●

**"THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION RECKONS THAT SPENDING ONE HOUR IN A SMOKY KITCHEN EQUALS SMOKING 400 CIGARETTES. IT IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF EYE AND LUNG DISEASE, AND IT DAMAGES THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNBORN CHILDREN."**

with farmer groups that saving just £2 a month is a struggle. The beauty of the mud eco-stoves is that they cost only labour and can be repaired just as easily without the need for spare-parts or technical assistance, which are often unavailable in developing countries.

Once a group of families in a village is using an eco-stove, neighbours want them, too. This snowball effect has led to 2,000

A new smoke free traditional stove being built



### | Information |

Contact: Maya Smeulders

[mayasmeulders@hotmail.com](mailto:mayasmeulders@hotmail.com)  
[www.abingdon-rotary.org.uk](http://www.abingdon-rotary.org.uk)

# You can count on the cadres

| JOHN PHILIP |

**R**OTARIANS can help protect the environment by incorporating environmental considerations into all of its humanitarian projects.

Where do we start? Changing the adult mind-set is not easy, but the young are more receptive.

Rotarians are involved in many youth activities especially literacy. If we decide to integrate environmental studies into all youth and literacy programmes, we will be making a great start.

One of the biggest threats to the environment is from waste products.

Even in developed countries, less than 30% of waste is recycled. There are many developing countries where there is no waste disposal provision. Surely this is an ideal challenge for Rotarians.

On an island in Lake Victoria (Ukerewe) where I have undertaken many projects, the streets and suburbs are littered with plastic and other rubbish. The islanders do not have the means to dispose of rubbish, most get washed into the lake.

Trees are cut down for firewood – the deforestation is wrecking the ecosystem and smoke-filled cooking methods are damaging the health of the islanders – mainly young people. I wish I could start a campaign in local schools.

Whatever we decide to do, I urge good planning and reliable monitoring and evaluation. Most importantly, please ensure that we do no harm.

I say this wearing my hat as a Rotary Foundation Cadre.

This is a group of Rotarians whose mission is to ensure that Rotary projects meet community needs, are well designed and implemented, sustainable and have measurable outcomes.

To some, these concepts may seem bureaucratic, but when you have seen an expensive x-ray machine donated to a hospital in a developing country rusting in its crate for 10 years because the hospital had no electricity and has no means of its safe disposal, it breaks one's heart.

I have recently been contacted by a

clinic which received a supply of cancer treating equipment which it does not want nor has means to dispose of safely.

It is a horrifying thought that some of our donations and some of our projects may be contributing to environmental damage. It is essential that we plan our projects carefully for which assistance is at hand from Cadre members.

I became a Cadre many years ago and am now one of three Disease Prevention and Treatment Cadre Co-ordinators in the world. I have also been asked to lead the current group of 30 Cadres in Rotary for Great Britain & Ireland.

Our aim is to help you increase the impact of your projects, ensure

sustainability and value for money. We can add value irrespective of project's location, size and source of funding.

We can also help with grant applications, community assessments, partnerships, and evaluation.

We do have experience of successful projects and not so successful projects!

I would like to recruit enthusiastic new Cadres, especially in the fields of environment, peace and conflict resolution, and finance. ●

## | Information |

John Philip, Newbury Rotary  
[drjohnphilip1945@btinternet.com](mailto:drjohnphilip1945@btinternet.com)



*We need to integrate environmental studies into all youth and literacy programmes*



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David Birch, *Chichester*

## USABLE ALL YEAR ROUND

"The conservatory is now used throughout all seasons of the year and is far more comfortable to sit in whatever the weather outside."

Mr & Mrs Gibson, *Portishead*

## MOULD & CONDENSATION

"This is the best thing we have done in this house. Used to run with condensation and now zero."

Karen Thomas, *Chippenham*

## COOLER IN SUMMER

"You could have fried an egg on the table in there in the summer, I now look upon the conservatory as a new room. It is quiet, restful and cosy."

Carol Doyle, *Surrey*

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Anne Bird, *Bristol*

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Mr & Mrs Bailey-Webb, *Warsash*

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# HOLGER KNAACK

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**I**N ROTARY, February 23rd is our anniversary, and February is also the month when we focus on promoting peace. There is a reason for this: contributing to peace and international understanding has been a high priority for us since our earliest days.

We are often asked: “How can we get involved in peace now?” There are many paths to peace in Rotary. Our youth programmes point us in the direction of Positive Peace, as does the work of intercountry committees and the Rotary Action Group for Peace.

Another path is the Rotarian Peace Projects Incubator (RPPI), an inspirational collaboration among Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary Peace Fellows and alumni.

Led by Rotarians in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, RPPI has designed 48 global projects that any club can support, either directly or through Rotary Foundation global grants.

Nino Lotishvili and Matthew Johnsen, alumni of the Rotary Peace Center at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, are two of the many volunteers.

*During my Rotary peace journey, I have learned how personal resilience helps build inner peace and create sustainable outer peace. This was the inspiration behind the Women Peace Ambassadors for the South Caucasus project, which is based on my field research in Georgia.*

*The RPPI team of Rotarians and peace fellows recognised the incredible potential of women from mixed-ethnicity families who live on borderlands to be role models for peace within and beyond their communities.*

*Through workshops on building inner and outer peace that draw on the power of storytelling, 40 participants will be sharing their stories and reaching around 400 extended family and community members. These inspiring but marginalised women will reclaim their inner strength as peacebuilders at the grassroots level. In this way, we will take steps toward the sustainable, peaceful society we need so much, not only in our region, but throughout the world.*

— **Nino Lotishvili**

*I was excited to join the peace incubator project and to further strengthen my ties with Rotary's peace community by working with past and current peace fellows to develop these proposals.*

*My team wrote five proposals — three in Bangladesh, one in Iraq, and one in Poland — that focus on the arts and on education to generate dialogue across religious divisions and avert the radicalisation of young people.*

*I was inspired by how, despite the pandemic, we came together via technology with a vision to develop, test, and strengthen ideas and to produce workable solutions that clubs across the world can support to advance peace. I am excited to work with Rotary's peace community to transform these visions into reality.* — **Matthew Johnsen**

Here is further proof that in Rotary, we prefer action to words. This is Rotary at its best. I encourage you to visit [rppi.ch](http://rppi.ch) to explore the projects and support them.

We have lasted 116 years because of our strong ethics, our passion for Service Above Self, and our unique approach to problem-solving.

One of our greatest strengths is how we reach across our communities and across national, ethnic, religious, and political divisions to unite people of all backgrounds and to help others.

This month, let's celebrate our history and the many ways that Rotary Opens Opportunities to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace, our ultimate mission. ●







## Book a **free talk** for your club

Book your free Mercy Ships Zoom talk today to find out how the *Global Mercy* will double our surgical and training capacity in West Africa.

Thanks to Rotarian's Global Grant pledges, the *Global Mercy* will be joining our fleet this year and we would love to update your club with our plans for the largest purpose-built hospital ship in the world that you made possible.

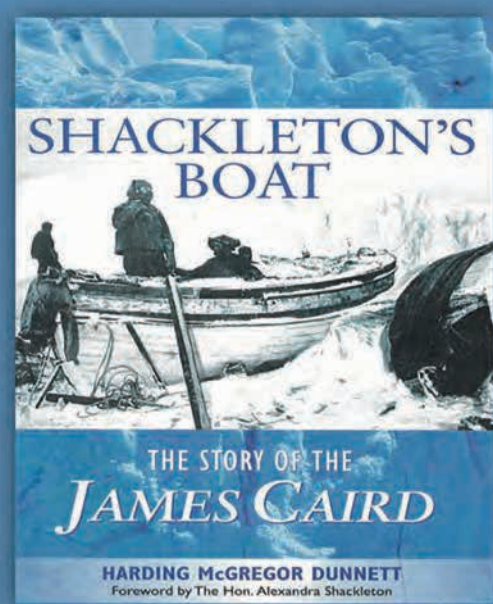
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**Rotary**



**K.R. Ravindran**  
Trustee Chair 2020/21

**H**AVING grown up amid lush green forests in the mountainous landscape of Sri Lanka, I always recall the words of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore: “Trees are the earth’s endless effort to speak to the listening heaven.”

How sad that so often we humans insist on interrupting this conversation. Just like every other living thing, we are a part of nature. But we are also the only species that bears the responsibility of protecting the environment for future generations.

The coronavirus pandemic has shed light as nothing has before on the relationship between environmental degradation and threats to public health.

A few years ago, the government-owned electricity company in my country planned to build a second coal power plant, in eastern Sri Lanka.

It would suck 93 million litres of water per hour from a bay where fragile ecosystems meet the deep sea, the site of one of the largest spawning grounds for sperm whales in the world.

After processing, those 93 million litres per hour would be dumped into the ocean, now loaded with toxic chemicals that put that marine life at great risk.

Learning from the lessons of the damage caused by the first plant, a coalition formed, made up of many public advocates, including Rotarians.

They ran a campaign that alerted the media, the public, and the local community to the potential dangers, in addition to taking legal action.

The government eventually abandoned its coal plant idea after the resulting public outcry. We can truly move mountains when we come together.

When some of us moved to add the environment as Rotary’s newest cause, we did so because of the urgency of the problem. In 1990-91, Rotary International President, Paulo V.C. Costa, set forth a vision, and today we will take this work to the next level.

We live in a time of great stress on our environment, of rapidly rising sea levels, massive storms, disappearing rain forests and wildlife, and destructive forest fires.

Climate change touches us all, rich and poor.

We will face the challenge strategically, as with the other areas of focus. In fact, the six other areas of focus depend on this one. For what good is it to fight disease if our polluted environment causes us to become sick again?

The Rotary Foundation will be central to this work. More than \$18 million has gone towards environment-related global grants in the past five years.

Building upon this work to protect the environment, we will give yet another Rotary gift to future generations. And you can be a part of it today. ●



**Tony Black**  
RI Director 2019/21

**W**E ARE only a month into the new year and the COVID-19 vaccinations are rolling out all over our countries.

The logistics needed for the vaccination programmes are daunting and I wonder if you have thought how you as an individual, club or even as a district could assist in your local communities?

Ask your local NHS, GP’s etc. how you can help.

Although we will be unable to collect money, it may be possible to help in the stewarding or distributing information leaflets.

There may well be other things where you may be able to assist but if possible, why not wear a Rotary or End Polio Now sweatshirt under your Hi-Viz vest?

After the year we have had, is this year not a time for positive change not only in ourselves but in Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland and our planet?

One of the most important issues of our time is the environment and climate change. Have you or will you take on an environment project? Such as beach or riverbank cleaning, reducing our plastic waste, planting trees, plants or vegetables and maybe get our young people involved.

You can work and help in your communities, but our clubs cannot be all things to its members and to the community it serves. We have limited human, financial and time resources, so there is a need to set a plan.

Planning is essential to achieving success in all areas of life including Rotary and although we are getting better at it, we could do better.

Whatever you are doing or will do, please enjoy and stay safe. ●





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— THE ELEGANT —

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— AD CODE —

**ROTA103**







The endangered  
Crown Crane bird

# *Environmental ambition from the heart of the Durham Dales*

*It is an ambitious, environmental project which  
aims to deliver on many levels – clean water,  
international partnership, education, protection  
of endangered species, and sustainability.  
And it is being spearheaded by Rotary in  
County Durham.*

| SUE CAMPBELL |

**M**ORE than \$18 million in Rotary Foundation global grant funding has been allocated to environment-related projects over the past five years.

But when The Rotary Foundation and Rotary International created a distinct area of focus to support the environment, it gave Rotarians on the ground even more ways to bring about positive change in the world.

Enter Barnard Castle Rotary in County Durham, and their far-reaching plan for a global grant which would change the lives and environment for thousands of people in the Saiwa Swamp wetland in Western Kenya.

The smallest National Park in the country, it's home to three endangered wetland species, the DeBrazza monkey, the aquatic antelope Sitatunga and the Crowned Crane.

The nearby town of Kipsaina is a long way from the idyllic ruined castle and cobbled market place of Barnard Castle. But the beginnings of the project to fund and deliver WASH provision - water, sanitation and hygiene - go back a long way.

The project is being driven from Barnard Castle by Rotarians Colin Dunnigan and Sam Forsyth – Colin's a past president of the main club, and Sam a member of



their satellite group and teacher at Barnard Castle School.

Colin said: “We heard of the work Sam had been doing in Kenya and the ambition to make a huge difference to the environment, in terms of protecting the wetland, which is being drained by local usage, and improving access to clean water and sanitation.

“It’s inspired us to get on board with what is a significant project, but one we’re determined to bring to fruition.”

This project sprung from a partnership between Maurice Wanjala of the Kipsaina Crane and the Wetland Conservation Group (KCWCG), and Sam, who is involved in the Kipsaina Education and Environmental Partnership.

Their friendship goes back 26 years when Sam, then working as a film maker, filmed Maurice’s environmental work for the BBC.

Maurice, Sam and their groups have been working since 2017 on an international partnership to further the educational and environmental work carried out by KCWCG.

Sam explained: “Not only is the wetland an oasis of biodiversity, but it acts as a natural sponge, providing drought and flash flood protection for tens of thousands of people living downstream.

“This ecosystem is threatened by encroachment from farmers and by people entering it for the extraction of water - water that often carries disease.”

The threatened wetland ecosystem is surrounded by several extremely poor rural communities, where the average household income is less than \$1 a day.

He added: “A key element of improving the lives of these communities is access to clean water and sanitation, which reduces water borne diseases and the dependence on the wetlands for water gathering, with a massive environmental pay-off.”

As part of their research, Maurice and Sam contacted the Africa Water Bank, which has worked for decades delivering innovative roof rainwater harvesting tanks and sanitation across Africa, many in conjunction with Rotary International.

This proposal is for two schemes to be funded, with tanks delivered to four schools and surrounding communities around the Saiwa ecosystem.

The schemes would incorporate a cashless water-dispensing kiosk, using

mobile phone payment, providing water to the wider community and generating money for the sustainable operation of these low maintenance systems.

In effect the swamp would be encircled with clean water, protecting the environment, and bringing in clean water to the centre of the population.

Maurice explained: “With a clean water supply fewer people will have reason to enter the swamp with less disturbance of the wetland vegetation and the wildlife living there – including the three key species.

“In addition, this project will work to train adults and children in efficient use of waste water for small scale organic vegetable farming – reducing the incentive to cultivate the wetland margins.”

Discussions have taken place with members of nearby Kitale Rotary Club in Kenya, who have provisionally agreed to act

as host club and there’s support in principle from Rotary North East.

This is not a cheap project. Colin said: “A technical survey demonstrated the feasibility of the project, coming in at a cost of £197,000.

“The biggest hurdle is that we need to raise around £65,000 before submitting a grant application. It’s a significant amount.

“But, with well targeted requests, we think it’s achievable.”

Rotary International’s aim to give Rotary members on the ground even more ways to bring about positive change in the world has helped inspire this ambitious project.

There’s a long way to go, but the results will be widespread and significant.

They will make a huge difference to the communities in the Saiwa wetland - people and endangered species alike. ●

**"THE SMALLEST NATIONAL PARK IN THE COUNTRY, IT'S HOME TO THREE ENDANGERED WETLAND SPECIES, THE DEBRAZZA MONKEY, THE AQUATIC ANTELOPE SITATUNGA AND THE CROWNED CRANE."**



Sam, Maurice and the Barnard Castle School team who helped to build the new classrooms

# THE ROTARY SOCIAL

What is being watched, posted, liked, shared and tweeted in the world of social media.



Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | Instagram



## HISTORIC ROTARY GRANT

Last year, Rotary supported Mercy Ships with an historic \$1.125m grant – the largest in The Rotary Foundation's 103 year history. Head to the videos section of our [Facebook](#) page to watch Rosa Whitaker, President of Mercy Ships, thank Rotary and explain how the grant will make a life changing difference bringing safe surgery those who need it.



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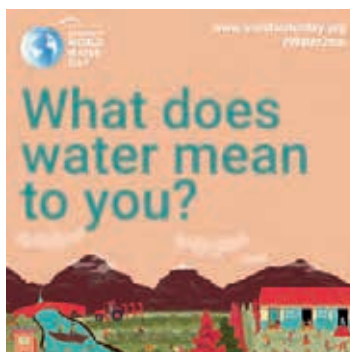


## BETTER TOGETHER

2020 saw the launch of Rotary's [togetherTalks](#), and we're kicking off the new year with a brand new series! Featuring even more insightful speakers and important topics, from tackling loneliness and promoting gender equality. Subscribe to the [Rotary GB&I YouTube Channel](#) and you'll also find all of the fascinating guests and events from Series 1 and 2 on demand.



Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | Instagram



## WORLD WATER DAY

Did you know 1 in 3 people live without safe drinking water? Since 1993, World Water Day has been held every year on March 22nd. As one of Rotary's Areas of Focus, we are dedicated to improving clean water and sanitation worldwide. This year's theme is [#Water2me](#), head to [worldwaterday.org](#) to learn, share and act.



Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | Instagram



## #ROTARYRESPONDS

Rotary clubs and volunteers around the world are continuing to support their communities as the COVID-19 pandemic endures. Head to Twitter and search [#RotaryResponds](#) to see all the amazing things Rotary is doing to help those in need and use that hashtag when sharing your own activities.



Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | Instagram



## IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

When Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas, uprooting thousands of families, Rotary clubs were ready to provide assistance and hope. A 30 minute in-depth film shows how Rotary supported the relief effort. Head to [Rotary International's Facebook](#) page or search 'Dorian: Rotary Responds'



Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | Instagram



## #MAKEKIDSHAPPY

Normally over winter and the Christmas season, Rotary clubs would be working with KidsOut to take disadvantaged children on festive days out. Despite that not being able to go ahead, Rotary's support hasn't stopped, with volunteers helping to pack toy boxes for children in refuge. Head to [@KidsOut](#) for more.

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Rotary International in  
Great Britain & Ireland



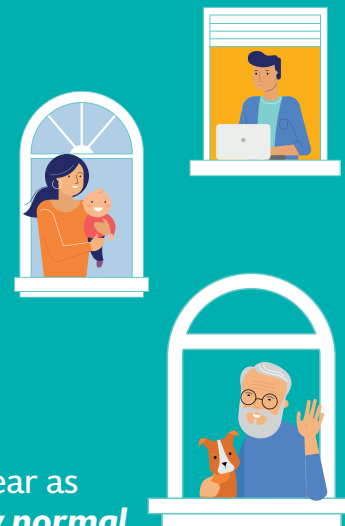
Rotary International in  
Great Britain & Ireland



# Getting the help, support and guidance you need in lockdown

**Boredom. Fatigue. Anxiety. Frustration. Fear. Sadness.**

Chances are everyone has felt these kind of emotions over the last year as our lives continue to be impacted by coronavirus. **That is completely normal.**



We've compiled some fantastic organisations who offer support to help us look after ourselves. Whether you just want a chat, or if your need for help is more serious and urgent.

## **Mental health**

### **Samaritans (UK and Ireland)**

24-hour emotional support for anyone who needs to talk.

116 123

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

### **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**

Provides listening services, information and support for men at risk of suicide.

0800 58 58 58

[thecalmzone.net](http://thecalmzone.net)

## **Bereavement**

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Information and support after a bereavement.

0808 808 1677

[cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)

## **Loneliness**

### **The Silver Line**

Friendship and advice for over 55s feeling lonely or isolated.

0800 4 70 80 90

[thesilverline.org.uk](http://thesilverline.org.uk)

### **Age UK**

Information and support for older people.

0800 678 1602

[ageuk.org.uk](http://ageuk.org.uk)

### **Age Action Ireland**

Information and support for older people.

014756989

[Ageaction.ie](http://Ageaction.ie)

## **Caring**

### **Carers UK**

Advice and support for people caring for someone else.

0808 808 7777

[carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)

### **Family Carers Ireland**

Advice and support for people caring for someone else.

1800 240724

[familycarers.ie](http://familycarers.ie)

## **Volunteering guidance**

### **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**

Represents and champions volunteering, providing support and guidance on how to safely make a difference.

[ncvo.org.uk](http://ncvo.org.uk)

## Keeping close when we're apart

The last year has taught us to cherish the connections we have. Pick up the phone to your friends, neighbours and club members, particularly those without access to other technology. Rotary clubs have seen first-hand what an immense difference tackling isolation and loneliness can make.

Thousands of you are already playing your part in supporting your community, but here are more ways you can help. **Food banks** are seeing huge rises in demand. Organisations like the **Trussell Trust**, **FareShare** and **Rotary4Foodbanks** are helping individuals and businesses give food to those who are hungry.

The **BBC's Make a Difference Give a Laptop** campaign is seeking donations so pupils have access to devices to learn from home in lockdown.

Organisations such as the **Royal Air Force Association** are looking for befriending volunteers to reach out to those who are lonely.

Become an **NHS Volunteer Responder** and steward at COVID-19 testing and vaccination centres.

Get involved with Rotary to support communities locally and nationally  
[rotarygbi.org/join](http://rotarygbi.org/join)

**Rotary**   
Great Britain & Ireland

# Time to change

*Last October, Willem Buttinger organised the Norfolk Climate Change Conference involving a distinguished panel of experts. The Norwich Blackfriars' Rotarian assesses what lessons Rotary can learn.*

**S**CIENTISTS and naturalists, such as Sir David Attenborough, as well as governments globally, all seem to agree there is an accelerating environmental and climate crisis. So why, unlike with COVID-19, are we doing so little about it?

At the Norfolk Climate Change Conference, we heard a powerful five-minute presentation from Dr Hayley Pinto, a psychiatrist, who is a speaker on climate change for Greenpeace and who has a special interest in oceans.

She succinctly explained how our evolution enables us to respond to COVID-19 as an urgent threat, but not respond to the far more serious distant threat of climate change.

Rotary's seventh area of focus is the environment and what more deserving cause can there be for all of us than to try and secure a habitable planet for the generations already with us and the ones to come? What legacy will we leave?

Now it makes no sense to separate climate change from the unfolding environmental crisis. The two are intimately connected. We need to work towards a sustainable future one that may give us a healthier planet and happier people.

The strategy both locally and globally must be threefold:

- To reduce our carbon footprint to zero.
- Plan for and adapt to the warming planet.
- Reduce the environmental damage.

Rotary must help with this by encouraging members to make changes to their lifestyles, educating their immediate and wider community, supporting projects with the aim of living sustainably for a healthier planet.

From my work with the Norfolk Climate Change Conference, it was clear to me that there are numerous numbers of individuals and organisations working towards these environmental aims, but these efforts are underplayed because of the lack of co-ordination.

Rotary's unique, non-political, local, national and international reach gives us a marvellous opportunity to draw in partners at all levels to collaborate on these initiatives.

So, let's get specific with things which you could do:

- **Run educational webinars:** I am working on one a bold vision for a healthier and happier sustainable future. Webinars educate the public and enhance Rotary's standing in the community.
- **Reduce your carbon footprint:** Website [www.giki.earth](http://www.giki.earth) will give one a personal carbon score. District Environment Officer, Keith Tovey, has looked at the carbon footprint for Norwich Rotary, where he is a member, with a view to providing feedback to encourage club members to travel less.
- **Working with the community:** [www.greening-campaign.org](http://www.greening-campaign.org) has a toolkit and offers help. Its motto is: "We began to destroy our world by making small changes to our lifestyles over the last 100 years. If we each make small changes to be greener and cleaner, those changes will again add up to make a healthy, richer happier future. We owe it to ourselves, future children, and our planet."
- Join Rotary's Environment Sustainability Action Group at: [www.esrag.org](http://www.esrag.org)



# together

## TALKS

WATCH ON DEMAND  YouTube



**DAME ESTHER RANTZEN**

PRESENTER, CAMPAIGNER & JOURNALIST

**"LIFELINE FOR LOCKDOWN"**

[rotarygbi.org/events/togethertalks](https://rotarygbi.org/events/togethertalks)

#bettertogether

Rotary   
Great Britain & Ireland

# Laughter is the best medicine

*TV icon, Dame Esther Rantzen, was one of the guests for series 3 of togetherTalks. Ahead of the live event, she discussed some of the lessons learned from the lockdown.*

| EVE CONWAY |

**D**YNAMIC Dame Esther Rantzen admitted she was “addicted to busyness”, being constantly on the go with her career as a journalist, broadcaster and tireless charity campaigner.

So, for the former ‘*That’s Life*’ presenter, lockdown has brought a dramatic change in pace — which she says she is finding a surprisingly positive experience.

“It’s such an odd feeling not to be busy for the first time in my life.

“I’ve always spent my life rushing around in a slightly idiotic manner.

“Rather unexpectedly, I’m really enjoying being able to pause and reflect, discovering an inner peace,” she revealed.

Dame Esther was planning big celebrations for her milestone 80th birthday last June but spent it catching up with friends and family on Zoom at her home in the New Forest, Hampshire, where she has been shielding since March with her eldest daughter, Miriam, who has ME.

“It’s lovely to spend time with her,

“She has health problems and I’m in a vulnerable age bracket, so it makes sense,” she explained.

The house is surrounded by a beautiful garden created by her late husband, broadcaster Desmond Wilcox, who died 20 years ago. It’s the place, she says, where she feels most “connected” to him. She was married to the documentary-maker for 23 years with whom she had three children.

Dame Esther is an honorary Rotarian of the Rotary Club of London and a Paul Harris Fellow. She says she is honoured to be invited to be a guest speaker for togetherTalks, a series of fortnightly webinars hosted by Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland.

Dame Esther is known to millions as the presenter of the BBC television series ‘*That’s Life!*’ which ran for 21 years and drew regular audiences of 18 million.

But she is also known as the passionate modern day campaigner who set up ChildLine in 1986 and The Silver Line for lonely pensioners in 2013.

She was awarded an OBE for services to broadcasting in 1991, a CBE for services to children in 2006, and in the 2015 News Year Honours’ List, was made a Dame for services to children and older people through ChildLine and The Silver Line.

She is patron for the charity Operation Encompass and a trustee for the charity Silver Stories.

Dame Esther explained: “Calls have gone up to both helplines showing the impact of lockdown and the pandemic.

“The Silver Line calls have gone up by 30% and so have Childline.

“So many children are living in homes that are not safe where there is violence, there’s abuse and they are getting in touch.

“With Childline, for example, there has been a 16% rise in contact from under 11-year-olds with the closing of schools, their only safe place.

“This pandemic is putting children and older people in danger.”

But Dame Esther hopes that some good will come out of the lockdown.

She hopes that people isolating from others by staying at home will give them an understanding of the situation facing so many elderly people.

She pointed out: “I do think it might be a time when the rest of the world can think for a moment about the most vulnerable and isolated older people for whom this is their way of life.”

Dame Esther also has a strong message that older people should not be treated as if they are past their sell-by date.

She said: “Older people are not a burden. The wonderful thing about the fabulous Captain Sir Tom Moore, who raised over £38 million by walking around his garden in the run-up to his 100th birthday, proved, if anyone doubted it, that older people, far from being a burden, are a treasure and they need to be treasured.”

And her message is to make use of this unprecedented time during the pandemic in a positive way despite the challenges.

She added: “I think that now is the time when we have a bit of time on our hands that we can write the story of our lives and I think our children and grandchildren might well be interested.

“I am currently writing ‘Stories I may not have time to tell you’.

“They are about my memories, with anecdotes from the 1940s. It describes what we ate during the War, such as when I was little we were lucky to have one egg a week, I didn’t eat a banana until I was six, and that there were bombs falling on my grandparents’ house in London.”


As for her own personal antidote to beat the lockdown blues, Esther revealed: “I now always make a point of having a moment of fun each day.

“We shouldn’t take ourselves too seriously. Laughter really is the best medicine even for a pandemic.” ●

## LIVE EVENT

<b>together</b> TALKS	DATE: FEBRUARY 2 2021	 YouTube ON-DEMAND
<b>WITH DAME ESTHER RANTZEN</b>		



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a light pink sweater, is sitting on a large sofa with a floral pattern of pink and red flowers. She is smiling and holding a white mug with a floral design. The room has a rustic feel with a wooden beam on the ceiling and a window with a curtain in the background. A blue text box is overlaid on the top right of the image.

**"IT'S SUCH AN ODD FEELING NOT TO BE BUSY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE. I'VE ALWAYS SPENT MY LIFE RUSHING AROUND IN A SLIGHTLY IDIOTIC MANNER. RATHER UNEXPECTEDLY, I'M REALLY ENJOYING BEING ABLE TO PAUSE AND REFLECT, DISCOVERING AN INNER PEACE."**

# Letters to the editor

## A chair is a pain

WHILST somewhat reluctant to prolong the debate on how to address someone in the chair, I thoroughly agree with Grahame Wiggin's and Simon Kalson's sentiments (*Rotary*, December 2020).

I have never liked being referred to as a chair – for six good reasons (quite apart for the fact that the word 'man' in chairman means management, not gender). A chair is, by nature, inflexible, it is constantly

sat upon, it will only move if pushed, it is normally made of dead wood, it encourages inaction rather than action, and too much contact with it can be a pain!

But, of course, there are more important things to worry about.

**Dick Arnold**

Chard Rotary, Somerset.

## Rotary at its best

I WANTED to congratulate you on the October edition of the magazine. There were so many interesting articles, in particular those connected with Black Lives Matter.

It was heart-warming to read of peace building and education, and to learn that Rotary is taking an active role, rather than sitting on the fence because the issue might be deemed too political.

In particular, I was very impressed by what is happening in Tavistock with the emphasis on education and the plan to reach out to other places and other countries.

Reading on, I was absolutely delighted that Rotary International has published its own diversity, equality and inclusion statement. This is Rotary at its best.

Here in Cumbria, a new group was formed in July called Anti-Racist Cumbria. As far as I know, I am the only Rotarian who is a member.

Its aim is to be actively anti-racist and, as such, to be the first county in the UK. Already, it is supported by a host of organisations and its first major event an online conference for schools was a huge success with coverage on TV, radio and newspapers.

**Jenny Baker**

Ambleside Kirkstone Rotary, Cumbria.

## Team leader has no gender

WHILST I think the put downs were unnecessary, I have no argument with Grahame Wiggin's assertion that there are more important things to deal with in the current situation than what we call the chairperson (*Rotary*, December 2020).

He is absolutely correct. But some have the capacity to do both.

If we want Rotary to be relevant to potential new members, so that our work continues long into the future, then maybe we should ask their views.

My proposal to Rotary Council, based on experience in commerce, that we use the term team leader has been adopted by Radcliffe Rotary. And yes, we do have our first new younger member during lockdown.

The beauty is that team leader has no gender. Team is seen as modern and proactive. In business we often hear the expression team building, I have yet to hear anybody refer to committee building.

I hope this may be helpful and promote consideration that, perhaps, neither chair, nor chairperson, nor committee is the best title going forward.

**Graham M Gledhill**

Radcliffe Rotary, Greater Manchester.

## We simply don't get racism

I WAS deeply upset, but not surprised, to read four letters disagreeing with the publication of the Black Lives Matter article in the previous issue (*Rotary*, December 2020).

Rotary is concerned with human rights and that's what Black Lives Matters is about.

As white people, until we educate ourselves about the lived experiences of black people, we simply do not 'get it'.

For example, the police have always treated me as an upstanding citizen – because I am a white, educated woman, assumed harmless.

However, I have friends, also hard-working, respectable people, who have been stopped and searched by the police up to three times a week for years, just because they are black and driving a nice car "so maybe it's stolen, maybe they are a drug dealer".

Imagine that being your experience and how it might make you feel.

Saying "I'm not a racist" is not enough. Especially if it's followed by "but"!

We all need to think about what it's like to experience life-long casual and institutional racism, and to question many of the assumptions we grew up with.

So, well done Rotary for publishing the original article.

However, seeing some of the attitudes that persist, I am deeply uncomfortable about how we apply the Four Way Test.

When we wonder why it's difficult to attract younger members and those of diverse backgrounds, this is one reason why.

Note: To learn about black British experience, this is a good place to start:

*The Sunday Times*' bestseller 'Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire' by Akala.

**Alison Braid**

Telford Centre Rotary, Shropshire



## Zoom is here to stay

THE Rotary Club of Kirriemuir is fully embracing Zoom as a means of communication during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are continuing regular weekly meetings with speakers as well as our business meetings taking place on Zoom.

We even had an Indian cookery class via Zoom. In fact, we record every meeting but only post the talks, with permission, on YouTube.

To date, recorded talks have ranged from pandemics, COVID-19 and PTSD, to surviving a helicopter crash, the Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, and talks from new and innovative clubs in our district.

We will hold the council and

business meeting recordings for a 180-day rolling period.

Of course, it hasn't all been plain sailing with around a quarter of the club members resigning because they either didn't like the technology or didn't believe that we should be taking significant decisions via Zoom.

The reality, though, is that Zoom, and its like, are here to stay with even the Church of Scotland holding its 2020 General Assembly by Zoom.

Around 800 commissioners and a day and a half of debate in a much streamlined, time-saving, carbon footprint-reducing format.

**Malcolm Rooney**  
Kirriemuir Rotary, Angus

## Work together to reduce mistrust

THE articles in October's *Rotary* magazine on racism were interesting, but only covered the issue from one perspective.

As an Englishman, I am proud of both our history and current efforts to eradicate poverty and discrimination.

In the UK, we are often at fault in downplaying our achievements, so I would like to remind readers of two achievements relevant to this issue that seem to be ignored:

- The UK was the first major country to abolish slavery. We then, at great cost for decades, patrolled the African coastline to try and stop other European countries continuing the slave trade.
- The UK is one of the few countries donating 0.7% of GDP as foreign aid – recently changed to 0.5%. The USA in contrast only gives 0.22%.

As someone who has lived half of his life in Africa, the rest in the UK travelling the world, I have experienced many cultures and believe I was easy-going, tolerant and non-discriminatory.

However, in recent months, the rather one-eyed constant criticism, often absurd, from Black Lives Matter, left wingers and certain media outlets about anything British, is having a very negative impact on the proverbial silent white majority and could have detrimental effect on race relations.

The UK is not a bad place to live for all races.

In fact, it seems to be the European country of choice for both non-white migrants and asylum seekers.

Let us all work together to reduce prejudice and mistrust.

**David Thompson**  
Loughborough Rotary, Leicestershire.

## The wrong direction

WELL done for 'putting your cards on the table' in the last issue editorial (*Rotary*, December 2020).

I am with Trevor Phillips, the former Head of Race and Equality Commission on Black Lives Matter.

We are now being judged by our colour contrary to what Martin Luther King advocated – let every man be judged by their character, not the colour of their skin.

Encouraging black people to see themselves as victims makes it harder for them to be successful.

No competent psychiatrist would ever condone seeing oneself as a victim.

One must suspect the underlying motivation of many white 'liberals' for wanting black people to see themselves as victims. Is it more about power than compassion? Are black people being used?

On balance many judge, as does the black actor Morgan Freeman, that Black Lives Matter is taking us backwards, not forward.

**Willem Buttinger**  
Norwich Blackfriars Rotary, Norfolk.

## On your Marx

AS a long-time student and teacher of philosophy, I always find it something of an irritant when the word 'Marxist' is used pejoratively in reference to any socio-political movement of which the writer disapproves. (*Rotary*, December 2020).

Karl Marx was a philosopher who spent most of his time in this country seated at a table in the British Library reading room working on his lengthy and somewhat obscure work on what he saw as the essential relationship between economic and social structures.

Such a man would be unlikely to be moved to riot or incite others to do so.

Neither is there any reference in his work to the need to destroy statues or deface war memorials.

Perhaps if it is found necessary to reference any 19th century theorist to such activities then it may be worth looking at the Frenchman Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, although Proudhonist does not slip as easily from the tongue or pen.

Better still, keep partisan politics out of Rotary and concentrate on our business of community service.

**Chris Dandridge**  
Leigh on Sea Rotary, Essex.

## We need to capture the spirit

THE way we have operated our Rotary club has changed overnight during lockdown. Things were beginning to evolve anyway, but there are always some members who resist change.

However, with lockdown, change became inevitable and quick.

Our meetings and events all became online events. Online meetings and the Virtual Convention have brought more global information and connectivity between the clubs around the world which should continue in the post-pandemic period.

The pandemic also showed that there are a lot of people out there who want to help in the community and we need to present Rotary to them as a suitable organisation to join.

Rotary has evolved fast during the pandemic and we hope that we can keep the 'new' Rotary which adopts better to the changing times.

As Paul Harris said: "We must continue to evolve". I hope that the changes in the way Rotary operates and the new focus on the environment will help to bring Rotary more into the community and help more people to learn about our organisation.

**| Suzan Walsh**

Cheam and Sutton Rotary, Surrey.

## Woke rubbish

YOUR editor's comments (*Rotary*, December 2020) that supplying water to deprived communities is political, is absolutely rubbish. Regrettably, you are a supporter of a left-wing Woke organisation.

**| Dr J Telling,**

Abbots Leigh, North Somerset.

**Editor's note:** According to UNESCO, water plays a critical role in wars between and within nations. Access to drinkable water is a daily concern in arid regions, such as Palestine and Israel.

## Time to speak out

I WRITE to say how much I appreciated your challenging, thoughtful and appropriate article in December's *Rotary* Magazine, emphasising that most things we do, internationally and nationally, could be interpreted as political.

Black Lives Matter highlights many aspects of racism, involving the need for a balanced approach to the teaching of history, which needs to include Black History.

The letters you published made me wonder if Rotary was an organisation with which I want to be involved.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin, our first black woman Bishop – of Dover – observed recently: "We have to see it first. If we don't experience it, we don't want to acknowledge it – we want to sleep at night."

She is a former Chaplain to the Queen, and to the Speaker of the House of Commons. She had opposition to her appointment, some of which was, undoubtedly, racist.

Any demonstration can be hijacked by a minority. This then provides a great excuse for those who find it a bit uncomfortable to label it all that way, citing our own prejudices as a reason.

Who can object to protests

highlighting the murderous behaviour of white police on a black man on the ground? Those Black Lives Matter protests draw attention to current inappropriate behaviour and violence occurring daily to people who are 'other' in this country and around the world.

I quote from the poetic form of Martin Niemöller's 'Confession' which is to be found in the United States' Holocaust Memorial Museum:

*"First they came for the socialists,  
and I did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a socialist.*

*Then they came for the trade  
unionists, and I did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I  
did not speak out –*

*Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me –*

*And there was no one left to speak  
for me."*

Surely, that message epitomises Service Above Self and passes the four-way test for the things we think, say or do? Is that not the reason we are all Rotarians?

**| Jane Horn**

Melton Aurora Rotary, Leicestershire.

**"ANY DEMONSTRATION CAN BE HIJACKED BY A MINORITY. THIS THEN PROVIDES A GREAT EXCUSE FOR THOSE WHO FIND IT A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE TO LABEL IT ALL THAT WAY, CITING OUR OWN PREJUDICES AS A REASON."**

## The joy of volunteering

A POINT made in your very good 'and finally...' article asked how many Rotarians volunteered to be games-makers at the 2012 Olympics (*Rotary*, October 2020).

A very good question and I'm not sure if we know the answer.

However, my friend and neighbour, Mary, was then 70, had to make several journeys 40 miles each way across London to train for the closing ceremony. During the event she was a volunteer driver. The

time commitment was substantial, even for volunteers local to London.

As a Surrey County Councillor, I was an ambassador for the cycle race. We had uniforms and underwent training. From my position in Weybridge, the peloton passed in 12 seconds. But it was worth the effort!

**| Denis Fuller**

Farnborough Rotary, Hampshire.



We welcome your letters on any subject to do with Rotary. Submissions should not be more than 250 words long. Please include your name and address.

**Email:** [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org) or **Post:** Rotary magazine, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PB.

The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and Rotarians.



## Wrong to use CND symbol

ALISON Sutherland's article about the Rotary Action Group for Peace was interesting and RAGFP's aims seem commendable and laudable.

However, the aerial photo of people assembled in the outline of the 1970s 'peace' symbol was disconcerting.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a left-wing group committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament by the western democracies, used that symbol as theirs.

It is not certain if CND were bankrolled by the former USSR, but they certainly enjoyed its support. Soviet dictator

Joseph Stalin famously referred to them as his "useful idiots".

As a non-political organisation, Rotary should be much more circumspect.

### **Hugh McCrea**

Bridge of Allan & Dunblane Rotary,  
Stirling & Falkirk.

**Editor's note:** The peace symbol, was designed by Gerald Holtom in 1958 for the British nuclear disarmament movement. However, the symbol has since been adopted as a generic peace sign, crossing national and cultural boundaries.

## Mind your language

THANK heavens for the balance provided by Dave King's 'and finally...' article (*Rotary*, December 2020).

I read with dismay some of the comments and inappropriate language contained within your letters' page.

A recent high profile chairman resigned after using outdated and inappropriate language and such language sadly was evident on those pages.

'Coloured' is not an acceptable term for use these days and I would ask the writer to think carefully about his use of such language.

I hold no allegiance to Black Lives Matter but I would ask you to consider this in the light of the appalling treatment and deaths we have witnessed on our TV screens.

Of course all lives matter but if your mother had just died would you be comforted by the words 'well all mothers die' as they surely do?

Please show some compassion.

### **Pamela McKee**

Formby, Lancashire.

## Equality issues are humanitarian

THAT was an excellent piece on 'Uncomfortable history' in the 'and finally...' editorial in the October issue of *Rotary* magazine.

You tackle a difficult, current topic with common sense and I enjoyed reading it. And I absolutely agree that this is humanitarian.

Winston Churchill was outrageous when he referred "to a stronger race, a higher-grade race".

Fortunately, we now know better, but he was speaking in 1939. A generation or two later, we think differently.

### **David Ball**

Cambridge Rotary, Cambridgeshire.

## Long way to go to embrace humanity

REGARDING 'Uncomfortable history needs telling' (*Rotary*, October 2020) it is important to reflect the context of things accurately with regards to the demolishing part.

Perhaps it may never be possible for some to comprehend how black people feel passing by these statues, knowing the horrors of the slave trade.

Indeed, is there any humanitarian evil that can equal such deeds?

How would you feel if these things happened to your family or in your community?

I do not advocate violence.

However, minimising the enormity of the darkness of the deeds of historic figures, and avoiding the right balance of history AND justice, just because the victims were not from this community or race, is a signal that our generation still has a long way to go in embracing our humanity.

I do agree that Rotary needs to talk about it and be a part of change, because this is a humanitarian issue.

### **Marilyn Gwet**

Brynmawr Rotary, Gwent

# Students tackling the problems of tomorrow today

| LAURA WILLCOX |

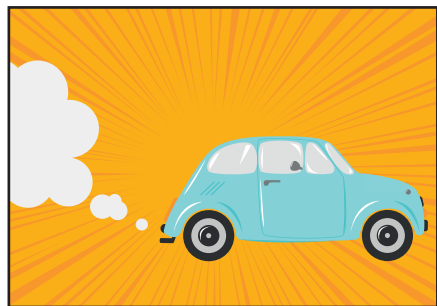
**T**HE Rotary Young Environmentalist Competition showcases the unique solutions to environmental problems from participants.

The aim of the competition is to encourage participants to explore and increase their awareness of issues the world is facing and think about ways they can help to overcome them.

Supported by their local Rotary clubs, 2020 featured a wide variety of projects tackling numerous environmental issues.

Young Environmentalist is one of many competitions where Rotary is involved in developing skills of the future generation.

Rotary Young Environmentalist 2020 is proudly sponsored by Veolia, and these were the winners:



## Junior (7-10 years old)

### 1st: Cragside Primary School (Newcastle Gosforth Rotary)

Pupils from Year 4 created 'Climate Club' and started a campaign called 'Ditch the car, it's not far' encouraging people to walk or get public transport to school. The campaign ran for a week and resulted in less students travelling to school in a car.

With the success of this campaign, the 'Climate Club' rebranded as the 'Eco-Club' with year 5 students joining in to help the environment.

The school won a £150 grant which was used to buy litter pick equipment after noticing plenty of rubbish in the area.

The Eco-Club plans to work with more pupils and other schools to make a bigger difference.



### 2nd: Delapre Primary School (Northampton West Rotary)

A group of students from Delapre Primary School were inspired to collect crisp packets after discovering how this waste frequently ends up in the world's oceans. The packets don't decompose in landfill either.

The packets are sent to TerraCycle, which recycles items some centres can't to make new items. The scheme allows schools to earn money to fund play equipment.

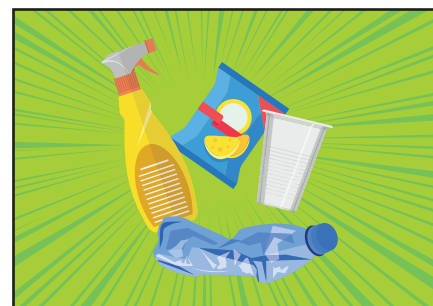
### 3rd: Holy Trinity Primary School (Bretby Rotary)

Four pupils from Holy Trinity Primary School set up a scheme to recycle batteries.

They have also been in contact with the local council suggesting more recycling bins were needed for card, paper and other materials.

The students have also come up with an innovative idea for the community called 'Fish Fridays'.

On the last Friday of every month, the scheme encourages people to fish for plastic, keeping beaches and the community clean.



## Intermediates (11-13 years old)

### 1st: Clydebank High School (Dumbarton Rotary)

Clydebank High School students decided to start a war against plastic.

Pupils recorded how much single-use plastic their class used over the course of a week, and the results were staggering.

To help combat this issue, the class wrote to their council asking to change the plastic being used in their canteen.

The students also made pledges about what they will personally do to reduce their consumption of single-use plastic.



### 2nd: Cotswold Academy (North Cotswolds Rotary)

More than 150 million tonnes of plastic is estimated to be in our oceans, and more than 90% comes from rivers and streams. Cotswold Academy students created a project to reduce the amount of plastic reaching the sea from rivers.





**"YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST IS ONE OF MANY COMPETITIONS WHERE ROTARY IS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING SKILLS OF THE FUTURE GENERATION."**

They attached chicken wire to a bridge over a stream to hang down into the water.

This caught floating plastic floating which was taken to the recycling centre.



### **3rd: Kinver High School (Kinver Rotary)**

Kinver High School students made printers the target of their campaign 'Fridays 4 Future'. Parents and teachers were advised to reduce their printing output by using both sides of the sheet and employing a smaller font.

Parents and teachers were also given a list of alternative items to use in other areas of their life such as bamboo toothbrushes and metal straws.

### **Seniors (14-17 years old)**

#### **1st: Rebecca Fulford, Cotswold Academy (North Cotswolds Rotary)**

Air pollution can be caused by many things such as plastics, fires and gasses. This can cause problems for our own health and the health of the environment. Using an air monitor, Rebecca established areas in the school with the worst air pollution.

The results showed how the worst air pollution came from cars and busses coming and going from the school, leaving their engines on. Rebecca came up with a plan to reduce the effects of vehicles' air pollution by educating drivers to reduce the amount of engines being left on when not in use.

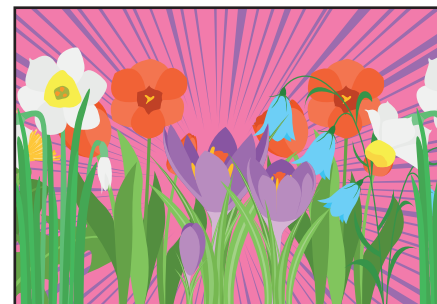
#### **2nd: Sian Mercer, Thomas Adams School (Wem & District Rotary)**

Sian Mercer has been vocal in her school and community to reduce their impact on the environment.

One of Sian's projects encouraged collecting plastic bottle tops to create a piece of artwork which would raise awareness of the importance of recycling.

Sian also created a well-researched project about the effects of micro-plastics.

After analysing the effects they have on the environment, she came up with a series of solutions what individuals, industry and the government could do to tackle the issue.



#### **3rd: Charlotte Ley, The Leys School (Cambridge Rotary)**

Charlotte's waste minimisation idea was to transform areas of grass into flower beds on unused sports fields, verges and areas of common ground.

Flowers and bushes remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, providing a food source and habitats for insects and birds, so helping to improve biodiversity. ●

# Rotary Marketplace

Welcome to the all new Rotary Marketplace, which offers the opportunity to sell to over 40,000 members and purchase from fellow Rotarians within this community.

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Foreword by Jane Goodall DBE

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## LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

### PLANT TREES **FOR A BETTER WORLD**

**Rotarians in these isles are currently developing a portfolio of projects to stimulate increased environmental action. Paul Keeley from Newcastle Gosforth Rotary explains what they are trying to do.**

**P**LANTING trees is a clear and cost-effective avenue towards tackling climate change.

Only last year, scientists from the Swiss university ETH Zürich suggested that planting billions of trees across the world would be a neat way of taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

As trees grow, they absorb and store the carbon dioxide emissions which are driving global heating.

New research estimates that a worldwide planting programme could remove two-thirds of all the emissions from human activities which remain in the atmosphere today.

As President of Rotary International between 2017-18, Ian Riseley wanted 1.2 million trees planted during his year in office – one for every Rotarian in the world.

That challenge continues to be met by Rotarians across Great Britain & Ireland, under the umbrella of the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG).

There is a wide variety of projects within ESRAG's portfolio such as beach and river clean up, plastic removal, recycling and energy conservation, but tree-planting remains at the heart of those activities.

Many Rotary clubs new to environmental actions may wish to begin with something relatively small.

A good example of this would be Halifax Rotary's annual tree-planting.

Each year they link with a local school or firm to plant 420 free saplings from the



Paul Keeley with Darajani School Interact Club, sponsored Kibo Rotary, Tanzania

Woodland Trust.

This time, the lockdown ruled out the local school but with Sowerby Bridge Rotary and Business Network, they enjoyed fresh air and exercise, carefully separated, to carry out the planting.

In Scotland, Kirkcudbright Rotary has similar experience of tree-planting, having worked with schools and the local council on a number of small tree-planting projects. It's a great opportunity for Rotarians to work with youngsters on an issue of mutual interest.

However, Kirkcudbright Rotary is not just considering small schemes. Rotarian Keith Bruce said: "The Borders Forest Trust started forest restoration 20 years ago in the south of Scotland.

"The town of Langholm has recently reached agreement for a community buy-out from the Buccleuch Estate with the ambition of turning the land on its doorstep into a large nature reserve. This is where significant volunteer tree planting is programmed for 2021/22.

"Trees will be predominantly Alder, Birch, Oak, Hawthorn and Hazel. Rotary clubs in Southern Scotland, working with the Borders Forest Trust, will aim to provide many volunteers for these extensive planting operations."

In North Yorkshire, Harrogate Rotary has a similar scheme to restore woodland in Nidderdale. Terry Knowles said that they have already planted 20,000 trees, with people donating more than £50,000



to help balance their carbon output.

In Sussex, Lewes Rotary is working on a project not in a rural area, but in the market town itself.

Ruth O'Keeffe explained: "Lewes Urban Arboretum is a project developed by the Friends of Lewes Civic Society Trees Group and now supported by Lewes Rotary.

"It has resulted in planting 80 mature street trees and several hedgerows to improve the natural environment and biodiversity of this small market town.

"Supported by residents and local councils there are plans to plant many more trees in identified areas, as a continuing project that other similar towns up and down the country could replicate."

When planning a tree-planting activity, many Rotary clubs have chosen to

provide funding for tree-planting overseas.

During Ian Riseley's tenure as President, 44 Rotary clubs gave financial support to the development group Sustainable Global Gardens (SGG) who implemented the planting of 41,475 trees in East Africa.

This work was carried out through informal partnerships with 11 Tanzanian Rotary clubs as well as with hundreds of farmers in Kenya.

The great advantage of tree-planting in East Africa is that trees can greatly increase the productivity of small-scale farms and the income of poor households, so the initiative carries the twin benefit of poverty and hunger alleviation.

SGG currently has a project to plant 100,000 trees in Africa for both community development and carbon capture.

So far, SGG has recorded the planting of an estimated 30,000 new trees, and it is looking for continued Rotary support to reach its goal by the end of 2021.

Many of the tree-planting projects have involved youngsters.

Embracing the environment presents a perfect opportunity to showcase Rotary to the younger generation; through schools, Interact and Rotaract clubs.

They represent both the future of Rotary and the future of our planet.

Let's think about our young, let's think about our future and let us plant trees. ●



For more details of other environmental projects from the ESRAG portfolio, contact Kirsten Weber: [kirsten.weber@esrag.org](mailto:kirsten.weber@esrag.org)



**"MANY OF THE TREE-PLANTING PROJECTS HAVE INVOLVED YOUNGSTERS. EMBRACING THE ENVIRONMENT PRESENTS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE ROTARY TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION; THROUGH SCHOOLS, INTERACT AND ROTARACT CLUBS."**

Harrogate Rotary planting trees with local school children

## PRELOVED AND RELOVED

**T**HE QE Interact group based at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in Darlington is usually a very active, hands-on group but Covid has challenged how they have done things this year.

One of the aims of the group this year was a commitment to protecting the environment.

Its initial focus was raising awareness with posts on the group's social media account, but they wanted action not words.

Covid was restricting, however the group focused on what they could do rather than what they could not.

Recognising that an estimated 350,000 tonnes of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year, and with many people at home due to lockdown, the Interactors asked family and friends to have a spring clean sort-out.

As a result, the unused or discarded items were put to good use.

Mothers and babies in Africa were provided with baby starter kits thanks to a

charity taking a container to Uganda.

A further 800 items of baby clothing were donated to baby banks in County Durham allowing parents who were struggling financially to give their loved ones the best start.

Over four million people nationally are wearing footwear which is neither suitable nor fit for purpose.

At least 2,500 homeless people have no shoes, or shoes which are falling to pieces. To reduce footwear waste and its impact on the environment, QE Interact collected and donated over 150 pairs of shoes to charities supporting the homeless.

The call from the NHS for scrub bags for key workers at Darlington Hospital was answered, made out of old material destined for the bin.

Having worked with many care homes before lockdown, QE Interact knew how important interaction was.

They built and delivered bird boxes, plus hedgehog homes to a local care home, giving residents points of interest

whilst unable to see visitors.

Other unwanted items collected were used to create reminiscence boxes - boxes containing items from the past to prompt discussions and raise smiles with care home residents.

ActionAid estimates that one in 10 girls in Africa will miss school when they have their periods, putting them at greater risk of child marriage, and getting pregnant at a younger age.

Conventional sanitary pads contain a high percentage of plastic, up to 90%. QE Interact put together 40 reusable sanitary packs for girls in Uganda, allowing them to attend school.

Each kit lasts a girl three years, buying back over 180 days of education with dignity whilst limiting the impact on the environment, periods without plastic.

We buy 10 items when our grandmother bought two. We often think buying new things make us happy.

Maybe it's time to reconsider the foundations of our lifestyles. Buy less, choose well, make it last. ●



**"A FURTHER 800 ITEMS OF BABY CLOTHING WERE DONATED TO BABY BANKS IN COUNTY DURHAM, ALLOWING PARENTS WHO WERE STRUGGLING FINANCIALLY TO GIVE THEIR LOVED ONES THE BEST START."**





**"IT HAS NOW BECOME A WELL-OILED RECYCLING MACHINE AND BY 2020, HE HAS RAISED JUST OVER £12,000 FOR CHARITY FROM RECYCLING."**

## A ONE-MAN RECYCLING MACHINE

**R**OTARIAN Samy Wassef is a one-man recycling machine who is making sure that valuable resources don't end up in landfill.

A member of Worcester Rotary, Samy got into fund-raising 30 years ago while working at the George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton to buy equipment for the Intensive Care Unit.

And that's when he struck on the idea of recycling.

After finishing his shift, Samy would go round the hospital picking up drinks cans from waste bins, sorting aluminium cans from steel ones and then recycling them to raise cash.

Over two years, he managed to raise £1,500 for the hospital.

Fast forward to 2010 when he joined Worcester Rotary, Samy used recycling as the focus of raising funds for international humanitarian projects.

"I thought if recycling was successful 20 years ago, while individuals in the UK were not actively doing recycling, then surely in 2011 when green bins were around and people were more aware of

recycling, we should do it for our Rotary club," he said.

So over the past decade, Samy has become a serious recycler, initially storing the goods in his garage and even the kitchen, before building a workshop in his garden.

"I started asking Rotarians, neighbours, family and businesses to help me," he recalled.

"I was looking for drinking cans, mechanical equipment, cables, metal-based bathroom and kitchen accessories, pipes, old computers and televisions, electronics and so on.

"And while doing that, I was contacting the recycling centres asking how to get the best rates for metals.

"After research, we acquired a Waste Transfer Licence from the Environment Agency to transport waste from individuals and from businesses."

It has now become a well-oiled recycling machine and by 2020, he has raised just over £12,000 for charity from recycling.

In that time, Samy's recycling and

fund-raising efforts have turned scrap metal into a deep well for a school in the Philippines, made a donation to supply artificial limbs to amputees, contributed £3,700 to help patients in seven African countries gain access to centres for the visually-impaired, and made multiple donations to the End Polio Now programme.

Samy has made a donation for a Global Grant for the Project Peanut Butter in Malawi, which aims to reduce the incidence of severe acute malnutrition, which affects children aged between six months to five years.

He has also bought 30 Rotary Water Wheel Barrels to save women and children in Africa carrying heavy water barrels up to 30kg in weight on their shoulders and backs.

The money has stretched to help reconnect the water supply to a school and a girl's hostel in Nepal.

And last autumn, the recycling proceeds were directed towards the recovery of Beirut, following the deadly explosion in the Lebanese capital.

Persistence has paid off, and the impact has been immense, turning over between £1,100 to £1,300 a year by recycling scrap metal.

"To establish a successful programme you need to believe it is worth the effort," added Samy.

"Know that segregated scrap metal has the best value and understand that disassembling equipment to get the metals is a skill.

"It is important to consider health and safety, and other legal issues, and advisable to have a team.

"You also need to know how to play the game to get the best rates for your recycling.

"But you also need a supportive spouse or partner, as well as supportive Rotarians, neighbours, family, friends, colleagues and businesses." ●

## STUDY CENTRE SUPPORT

**F**AREHAM Rotary in Hampshire is supporting a 14-acre environmental education centre during the current Rotary year.

President Mike Hurley selected the Stubbington Study Centre to provide funds for school students who might not have been able to visit.

He said: "Stubbington Study Centre offers hands-on, practical activities exploring nature and the environment, local culture, team-building and problem solving in such a way that learners of all abilities can succeed and have fun.

"That is why I chose the centre and I hope, with everyone's help, we can make a positive difference."

James Scarborough, Head of Stubbington Study Centre, said "For over 85 years, generations of Hampshire children have been given the opportunity to enjoy our 14-acre seaside site.

"Many of the children are on their first trip away from home with school and make huge gains in resilience and self-confidence while learning about the world around them."

Fareham Shopping Centre is lending a hand too, providing the space for a Rotary Wishing Well which is now the club's collection point for the Stubbington Study Centre. ●



## ECO SCHOOL AMBITION



**R**OTARY Lytham has joined forces with Lytham St Annes High School to fund the installation of large paper recycling bins.

One of the largest secondary schools in Lancashire, St Annes student-led Eco Council wanted to promote sustainability through the school's everyday actions.

One initial project was to recycle more, by collecting the large volume of waste paper generated each day throughout the school.

Ten recycling bins were bought from Glasdon, the Blackpool-based manufacturer, with the Rotary club chipping in with a £500 donation.

The bins, complete with Rotary stickers, were handed over to the school's Eco Council Chairman Alice Burr (right) and Vice-Chairman Alanna Brunton, from

President, Ray Thomas, and Past President, John Edwards.

Alice said that having the recycling bins would help the long-term aim of St Annes to become an eco school.

She said: "As the future generation, we feel it is important that we have the same opportunities to learn and explore the earth as everyone else.

"Recycling more in school was an issue pointed out by students and we are taking action to increase the amount of recycling bins around the school and to educate students on how to use them.

"If one person recycles all their wastepaper in a year, seven trees are saved, we are delighted our application to Rotary Lytham for funding was successful." ●

## NEW LIFE IN A GREY WORLD

**J**UST over a year after it took its initial steps to get off the ground, Rotary in Market Drayton is helping Shropshire Wildlife Trust develop its 'Feed the Birds' Scheme.

With insufficient members to be a part of Rotary in its own right, the satellite group is currently under the wing of Newport Rotary in Shropshire.

Recently, the group has also been helping Shropshire Wildlife Trust expand its unusual befriending scheme, 'Feed the Birds,' aimed at improving the lives of people who are living in isolation.

The Rotary club has supplied the Trust

with bird feeders and seed as part of a scheme, which also involves MENCAP.

The latest phase has allowed Rotarians to spend more time with individual residents identified through various support organisations.

The very first client, an 83-year-old woman, who had lived alone since her husband died over a year ago, said the bird feeder, and the chance to chat with someone, had been a lifeline.

As her family live in other parts of the country they were seldom able to visit her and she was lacking other company. ●



# ANNOUNCING

## Royal Air Force Apprentices' Commemorative Medal

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**Reverse:** The reverse of the polished medal features the Royal Air Force Apprentice Wheel badge, depicting a four propped propeller proudly worn by generations of apprentices, surrounded by the words ROYAL AIR FORCE APPRENTICES and the years 1920 - 1993 when the Royal Air Force Apprentice Training Scheme was in force.

**Ribbon:** The ribbon incorporates an amalgam of hatband colours generally worn by RAF Apprentices during their period of training at a Royal Air Force Apprentice Training School.

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## RECYCLED LAPTOPS HELP ISOLATED STUDENTS

**T**HE amount of electronic waste produced each year in Great Britain and Ireland continues to grow at an alarming rate.

Annually in the UK, two million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment is dumped, causing considerable environmental damage through ground, water and air pollution.

Now businesses are being encouraged to take part in computer and laptop recycling schemes to promote sustainability and protect the environment.

In South Wales, Newport Uskmouth Rotary was looking for a project which they could deliver during Covid, so they struck on their Laptops 4 Home Learning project.

"Covid-19 has affected us all and highlighted many problems, none more than the digital divide which exists in our schools," explained Club President and project leader, Anne Jackson-Bass.

"Too many young people have struggled to access online learning during lockdowns and self-isolation as they do not have the necessary IT equipment."

Through the club's youth programme,

Newport Uskmouth Rotary approached three schools to discover 700 students living in the most deprived areas of the city lacked IT equipment.

So the club launched a project to recycle redundant laptops, and working with IT business, Microsmith, who did all the work for free, they are refurbishing the equipment into Chromebooks.

Newport Uskmouth Rotary has bought the occasional battery and charger lead at a cost of £15 for each refurbishment, before the Chromebooks were delivered to the schools.

Thanks to a blaze of publicity across Newport, and working closely with the three High Schools, the Rotary club received an amazing response for unwanted laptops, and by Christmas 50 Chromebooks had been delivered.

"The response from the public and local businesses has been amazing and all three schools are supporting the project by sharing information on all their social media sites," said Anne.

"The club has been meeting on Zoom every fortnight and the project has been supported by all members: organising collections, ordering parts,

ensuring security is maintained, collecting and delivering laptops – all this through lockdowns, firebreaks and self-isolation!

"Funding the project was a big concern as, like everyone else, our fund-raising activities were on hold.

"We applied for grants and support from local businesses and received £2,266.66 from Comic Relief, £2,000 from Newport City Homes and have applied for a District Matching Grant. Our Christmas Zoom meeting also raised some funds and we are hopeful of further support as the project grows.

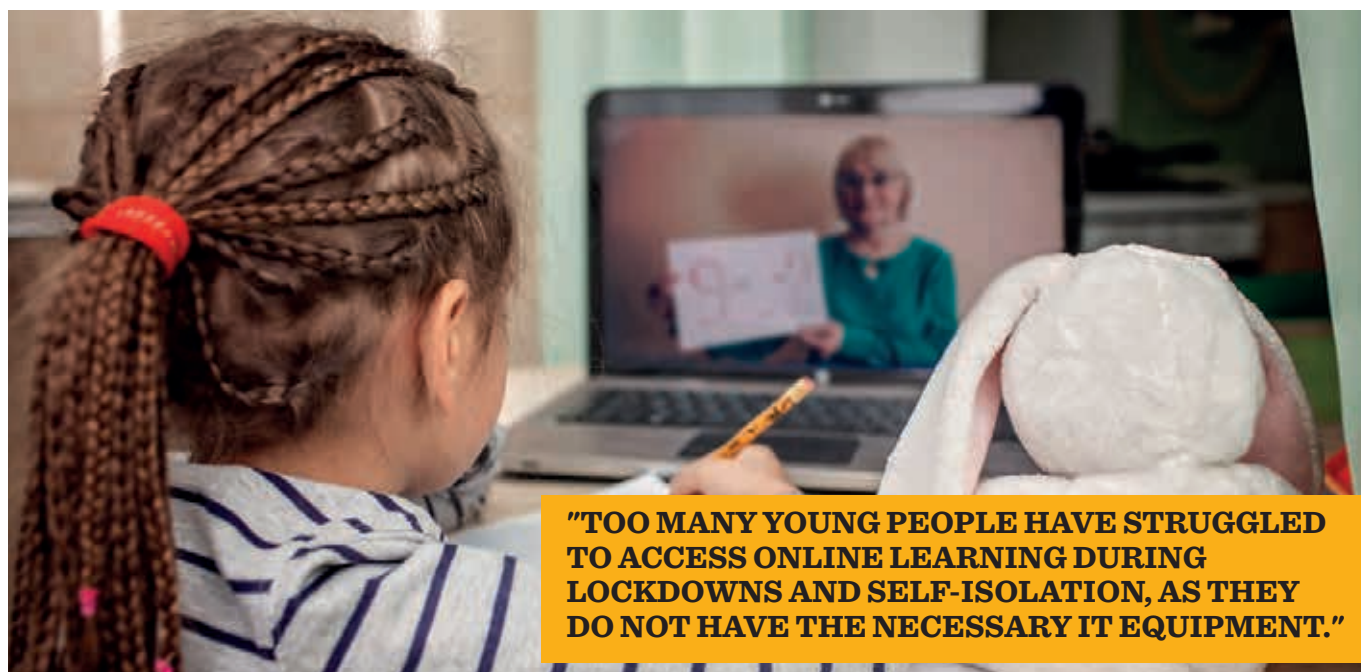
"Newport Uskmouth Rotary has restricted our collection area to the Newport postcode area and we have already received over 100 donations.

"We know we would struggle to collect from further afield so have tried to share our project with others. We have presented the idea to Rotary clubs in Cardiff, Swansea and Bolton all of whom are looking to replicate the project." ●



For more details visit:

[enquiries@laptops4homelearning.club](mailto:enquiries@laptops4homelearning.club)



**"TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE STRUGGLED TO ACCESS ONLINE LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWNS AND SELF-ISOLATION, AS THEY DO NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY IT EQUIPMENT."**





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## GOODBYE TO PLASTIC BAGS

**C**HEAM & Sutton Rotarians are doing their bit to provide an alternative to plastic shopping bags.

The Surrey-based club has teamed up with Stitches Haberdashery in Cheam to produce fabric bags from scrap material. These are then being distributed to shoppers free of charge so that they will use the fabric bags instead of single-use plastic bags.

Stitches is a registered hub of Morsbags which aims to keep fabric out of landfill and eliminate plastic pollution.

The Cheam & Sutton Rotarians are collecting discarded materials such as bedlinen, tablecloths, curtains and similar materials which can be transformed into a good sized shopping bag. Volunteers then cut and sew the bags.

The club is working with EcoLocal, a community environment group, and Sutton Council, which has attracted some volunteers to help with making the fabric bags.

It's one of a number of environmental projects the club has taken on this year, through promotion of Rotary's Young Environmentalist of the Year competition to raising awareness within the club.

Members have been sharing their best practices through an environment support pledge competition. The aim was to create and share a list of best environmental practices for all Rotarians to follow. ●



## COMMUNITY GARDEN SUPPORT



**U**TTOXETER Rotary has seen the fruits of its funding through a successful community garden project.

The club was approached a couple of years ago by Carolyn Green and Nichola Malkin, who wanted support for a community garden.

Then Club President, Anita Thomas-Epple, was keen to support the group since her focus was on sustainable environmental projects.

The Rotarians agreed to provide a polytunnel greenhouse for the keen gardeners.

The community garden project in the Staffordshire market town is now up

and running, and the socially-distanced Rotarians were invited to visit the site and see the polytunnel in situ.

Among those using the polytunnel greenhouses are members of the Helping Each Other mental health support group, who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Anita Thomas-Epple said: "Congratulations to Carolyn and the volunteers for their vision and dedication to bring the community garden to fruition.

"It is a fabulous project and Uttoxeter Rotary is delighted to provide the polytunnel for our community and we know that it will bring pleasure to many for years to come." ●

## FIGHT LITTER ON THE BEACHES

**I**N DEVON, Barnstaple Links Rotarians took the beaches to improve the local environment.

Members undertook a short series of beach cleans last summer - and they are hoping to repeat the exercise again later this year.

The team scoured the beaches, estuary banks and surrounding area for litter at Crow Point and on the Branton Burrows.

Members were generally impressed with the cleanliness of the area but still managed to pick up large pieces of plastic, a rusty old folding chair, used BBQ trays, face masks, beer cans, plastic bottles, pots, pans and crisp packets.

Club Secretary, Ralph Gordon, said: "Cleaning the beaches and surrounding area improves the coastal ecosystem by making sure the rubbish doesn't kill marine life or poison the marine life cycle." ●



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## STEP FORWARD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



**"WE HAVE ALREADY DISTRIBUTED OVER HALF A MILLION SHOES TO THOSE IN NEED ACROSS THE UK, AND TO OVER 15 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD."**

**R**OTARIANS from over 40 clubs in north-west England are raising awareness of footwear poverty by encouraging friends, neighbours and families to collect footwear which would otherwise end up in landfill sites.

Despite lockdown, District 1285 Rotarians have collected more than 8,000 pairs of shoes and raised over £2,500 for the Midlands-based charity, Shoe Aid UK.

Throughout September to November, shoes of all types were collected.

Shoe retailers in Rochdale and Bolton donated brand new trainers towards Rotary's footwear poverty campaign.

And children from Sandbach Interact Club, and Barton Moss Primary School in Eccles, filled collection boxes with shoes which were too small for them.

Once collected, the shoes were collected by Shoe Aid UK and transferred to its warehouse in Nottingham, where they were checked, sanitised, cleaned and stored ready for distribution.

Shoe Aid is a national charity sourcing and supplying free footwear so that no child or adult goes without a decent pair of shoes.

Shoe Aid UK Trustee Andy Hughes explained: "Finding homes for the footwear is a pro-active activity that Shoe Aid UK is proud of.

"We have already distributed over

half a million shoes to those in need across the UK, and to over 15 countries around the world. In addition, we have educated over 25,000 pupils in more than 100 schools about the importance of recycling and repurposing footwear."

In the UK, more than 200,000 homeless people lack proper footwear. Without suitable footwear it can be difficult and even embarrassing to attend a job interview.

Globally, 1.5 billion people worldwide are without shoes, of which 300 million are children. Some 70 million children are unable to access suitable education because shoes are required as part of the school uniform.

The footwear poverty campaign by Rotary North West England is a response to not only help people in need, both locally and worldwide, but address a serious environmental issue.

Discarding shoes without trying to recycle them adds significantly to environmental problems. Research suggests that 22 billion pairs of shoes worldwide end up in landfill each year - 149 million pairs from the UK.

Although some natural materials used to manufacture shoes can break down within decades, such as leather and fabrics, other synthetic, oil-derived materials can take more than 100 years to biodegrade.

It is important to dispose or recycle

materials within shoe composition that can be used in modern manufacturing and agriculture.

Shoe Aid UK's Andy Hughes said their aim is to partner with the high street brand manufacturers, along with social enterprises and key waste recyclers, to find ways of using footwear which has reached the end of its life.

Swati Mukherjee, from Bolton Lever Rotary, is the organiser of the District 1285 Shoe Aid initiative which, she says, meets the needs of local and world communities, and addresses environmental issues.

She said: "In 2019, District 1285 organised a successful collection of winter coats to keep out the cold for people in local shelters and homes.

"This year, in the midst of COVID when many projects were curtailed, we have taken another tiny step, raising awareness of footwear poverty.

"Although these are simple projects, like donating a pair of shoes or a warm coat, it can open the door to opportunities and change lives of many people around us". ●

### Information

For more information visit:  
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## and finally...

From Managing Editor Dave King  
[editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)

# Environment is a game-changer for Rotary

**M**OST mornings, the serenity of the Solent provides an idyllic backdrop for my gentle runs along its scenic coastal paths.

Huge container ships ply their way in and out of Southampton docks, jostling with an assortment of sailing boats, including the Isle of Wight ferries, on this busiest of waterways.

Whatever the weather, as dawn is breaking, this is running heaven.

And yet, as I wend my way along the shoreline, there is the inescapable sight of an environmental disaster which is facing this planet.

Tiny pieces of plastic, bottle tops, fishing gear and PVC rope are often washed up on the stony shoreline. Occasionally you see a few spent shotgun cartridges.

Plastic bags of every description can be found partially buried in the mud alongside a buoy or plastic drum.

Picnickers leave a range of debris including crisp, sandwich and sweet wrappers, drinks bottles, and plastic cups, sometimes colonised by seaweed.

The other morning, I spotted a pair of old underpants and fingerless gloves lying on the beach – now that was a very odd

combination!

It is clear something has to be done before the damage done to our planet is beyond repair.

The environment is not new to Rotary.

There are many examples of clubs already working already on environmental projects, such as supporting sustainable living by building school vegetable gardens and compost centres.

We have seen Rotarians restoring river banks and forests by planting trees, shrubs and grasses, cleaning up rivers by collecting litter from rivers, creeks and roadsides.

Rotary has encouraged the use of renewable energy through installing solar units in remote villages, as well as reducing waste to landfill through selling used clothes and goods in Rotary charity shops.

The fact that the environment will become Rotary's seventh area of focus this July legitimises past environment projects and inspires us to take on new ones.

It will allow Rotary clubs to apply for Global Grants for environmental projects, supported financially by The Rotary Foundation.

But to my mind, the environment is a game-changer for Rotary and its future.

This dawned on me while interviewing

Gert-Jan van Dommelen, the Dutch co-founder of EndPlasticSoup, when he spoke about the impact the action group was having worldwide.

How youngsters at his local secondary school, just outside of Amsterdam, are chiding their parents to stop smoking.

Not just because they fear the damage to their parents' health, but also fearing the health of local wildlife picking up discarded cigarette butts; one of the most pervasive forms of plastic pollution.

The aim of EndPlasticSoup is ridding the world of plastic waste by 2050. Their number one target is single-use plastics, such as food wrappers and bags.

We often talk about Rotary remaining relevant, making our amazing organisation appealing for the next generation.

This younger generation are activists. They are environmentally-aware, conscious how they want to protect their planet.

But let's not kid ourselves. Caring for the environment is inter-generational too. It affects all of us and is tangible.

Surely, supporting the environment will be a win-win; for Rotary and the environment.

What are we waiting for? ●

## Rotary magazine | CONTACT US

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**Publisher:**  
Contently Limited  
[contentlylondon.co.uk](http://contentlylondon.co.uk)

**Advertising Sales Agency:**  
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Sizes M (38-40") L (40-42") XL (42-44")  
XXL (44-46") 3XL (46-48")

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<b>Postage &amp; packing</b>	<b>£5.50</b> <del>FREE</del>

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If at any time during its lifetime, an issue arises with the quality of the product please return it for an exchange or immediate refund in full. Returns are post free (UK only).

Sizes  
M - 3XL



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(we are here 9am-6pm Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm Saturday)

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(current catalogue price refers to James Meade Men's February, March and April 2021 catalogues).

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Crawhall, BRAMPTON, Cumbria CA8 1BR**

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REFERENCE	SIZE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
7B4 GR			£39 <del>£29</del>	

P&P	<del>£5.50</del> <b>FREE</b>
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\*Some elements are not commissionable, including UK travel, room/travel upgrades and supplements, insurance premiums and bookings made through a third party (to include travel agents, online booking sites or any dedicated media partner departures) and any bookings where the Rotary Club nomination was not mentioned at the time of booking. A commission invoice will be requested from your Rotary Club via the lead name on the booking, in the month following that of the departure. Payment made to your Club, for all that travel, within 28 days of receipt of invoice, for them to use as they wish. Free amend up to 45 days before travel is for bookings made by 28th February 2021. Booking protection policies only applicable to 2021 departures. Covid-19 testing in place for as long as is deemed appropriate to do so.



**ABTA**  
ABTA No. V4744